



# Supports for your child who is deaf or hard of hearing

**Learning language and how to communicate**

Easy Read version



**ndis**

[ndis.gov.au](https://www.ndis.gov.au)

# How to use this guide



The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) wrote this guide. When you see the word 'we', it means the NDIA.



We wrote this guide in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.

**Bold**  
Not bold

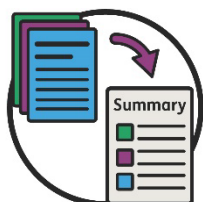
We wrote some important words in **bold**.

This means the letters are thicker and darker.



We explain what these words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 20.



This is an Easy Read summary of another guide.



You can find the other guide on our website.

[ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au/developing-communication](http://ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au/developing-communication)



You can ask for help to read this guide.

A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.

## What's in this guide?

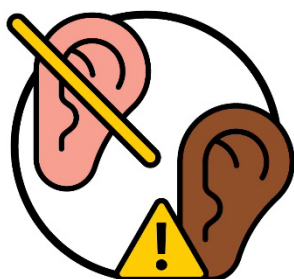
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## Who are these guides for?

These guides are for families of children who are:



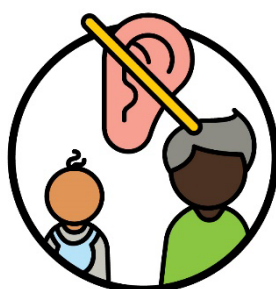
- younger than 7 years old



- deaf or hard of hearing.



Children are deaf or hard of hearing if they can't hear things around them.



They might be born deaf or hard of hearing.  
Or they might become deaf or hard of hearing later in life.



Some children also have hearing loss.

Hearing loss is when your child can only hear some things around them.

Children can have hearing loss in:



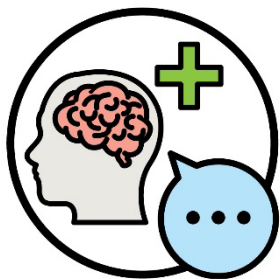
- one ear



- both ears.



# Why is language and communication important?



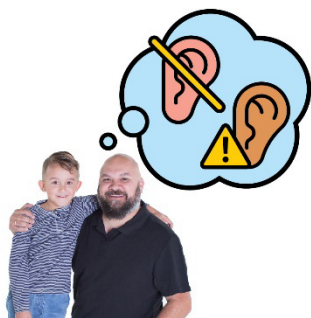
Language and communication helps a young child's brain grow.



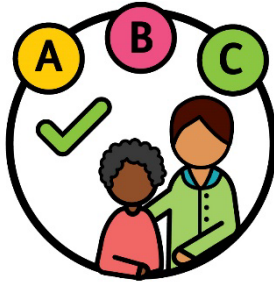
Children who are deaf or hard of hearing might not experience language and communication without support.



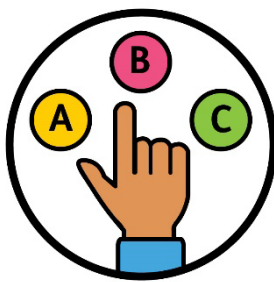
Getting support early in your child's life can affect how they learn for their whole life.



Support often starts as soon as you know your child is deaf or hard of hearing.



There are many ways to support your child to learn language and communication.



Understanding all the different options can help you choose the best supports for your child.

## What supports can you get?



There are many ways to support your child to learn language and communication.



You need to teach your child yourself.

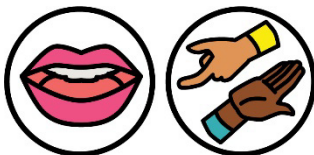
But you can get support to do this.

### Spoken language



You can get support to teach your child how to communicate by speaking.

Some types of spoken language support include learning how to:



- read lips
- use gestures – when your child uses their hands to help them communicate
- use facial expressions – when your child uses their face to show how they feel.





These supports often include **hearing technology**.



Hearing technology includes equipment to help your child hear sounds.

For example, a hearing aid.



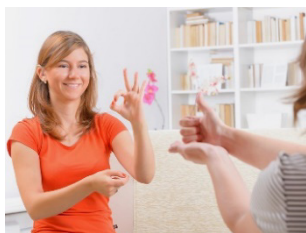
Hearing Australia support people younger than 26 years old who are deaf or hard of hearing.



You can learn more about hearing technology on the Hearing Australia website.

**[www.hearing.com.au/Hearing-loss/Children-young-adults](http://www.hearing.com.au/Hearing-loss/Children-young-adults)**

## Sign language



You can get support to teach your family sign language.



Sign language is when you use your hands to communicate.

There are different types of sign language.



Auslan is the most common sign language in Australia.



If you choose Auslan for your child, you should make sure your whole family learn how to use it.

This includes:

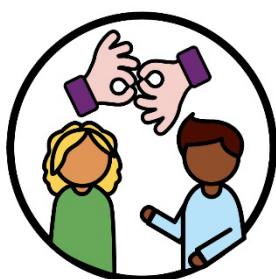


- family members who don't live with you



- carers and support workers.

Auslan works best when all the important people in your child's life can:



- understand them



- communicate with them.

## More than one language



Children who are deaf or hard of hearing might use more than one language.

We call this being 'bilingual'.



For example, your child and family might use Auslan and English.

You'd all need to learn Auslan if you don't know it.



Being bilingual can also help your family learn about the Deaf community.

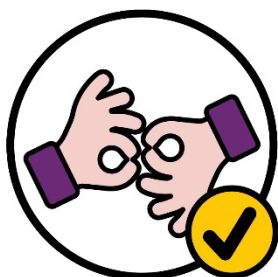
## Total communication



Total communication is when your child uses many different types of:

- language
- communication.

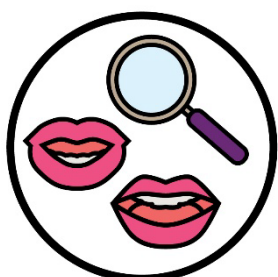
They might:



- use Auslan



- speak in English



- read lips



- use gestures or facial expressions.



Hearing technology and support from family is important for total communication.

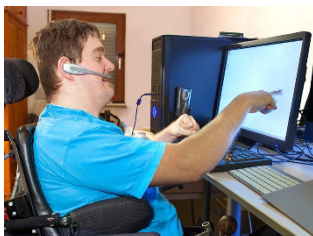
## What if your child has other disabilities?



Your child might also have other disabilities that affect their language and communication.



You can get supports that help your child speak.

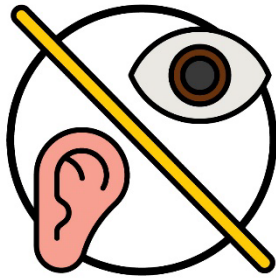


For example, technology that speaks for them.



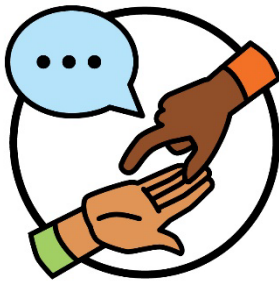
Or supports to help your child communicate in other ways, like using pictures.





There are also different ways for your child to communicate if they are:

- deaf or hard of hearing
- and
- blind.



For example, ways for your child to communicate using:

- their hands
- things they can touch.

## Who can you talk to?



You can talk to people you know and trust.

They can help you find out about language and communication supports that might work for your child.

This could include your:



- friends and family

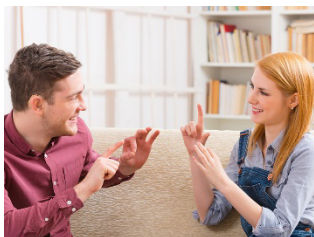


- **early childhood partner** – someone who supports children with disability and their families



- **providers** – who support people who take part in the NDIS by delivering a service.

You could also talk to:



- organisations that support people who are deaf or hard of hearing



- people with experiences like yours.

## More information

For more information about this guide, please contact us.



You can visit our website.

[www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au)



You can call us.

**1800 800 110**



Follow us on Facebook.

[www.facebook.com/NDISAus](http://www.facebook.com/NDISAus)



Follow us on Twitter.

**@NDIS**

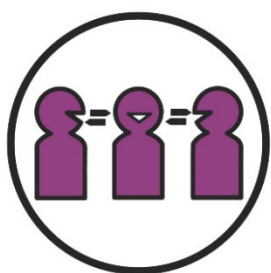
## Support to talk to us



You can talk to us online using our webchat feature at the top of our website.

[www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au)

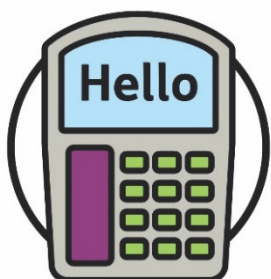
If you speak a language other than English, you can call:



Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)

**131 450**

If you have a speech or hearing impairment, you can call:



TTY

**1800 555 677**



Speak and Listen

**1800 555 727**



National Relay Service

**133 677**

[www.relayservice.gov.au](http://www.relayservice.gov.au)

## Word list

This list explains what the **bold** words in this document mean.



### **Early childhood partner**

An early childhood partner is someone who supports children with disability and their families.



### **Hearing technology**

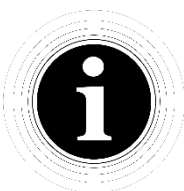
Hearing technology includes equipment to help your child hear sounds.

For example, a hearing aid.



### **Providers**

Providers support people who take part in the NDIS by delivering a service.



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