



Deaf Children New Zealand | Tamariki Turi O Aotearoa

Life Stages | Babies & Toddlers

Babies & Toddlers

The first 3 years of a child's life are the most important stage in terms of building strong relationships through communication. Good communication at home between you and your child is the foundation of language development.

Deciding on your child's first language can seem overwhelming, there are advocates for using sign language as your child's first language, and advocates for using technology to support oral language, and those who use both.

There is no wrong choice! We recommend that you use what works for you and your family.

Learning another language is a journey that takes patience and time but you need to remember that you do not have to be an expert. You will acquire language in tune with your child; as they learn, you will learn.

Don't be put off - to maximise language development it is critical to start young.

Recommended Resources

Developing language

A Parent hui was held in Christchurch in April 2015 which brought together 60 families of young children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

Go to the [Parent Hui 2015 playlist](#) on youtube to view the series of 13 videos capturing the entire 3-day event, however we recommend the following videos show the importance of starting language development as young as possible.

- [Developing language](#) - How do children develop language and how parents, whānau, caregivers can get involved in supporting children to develop language.
- [It talks 2 to Talk](#) - A practical guide to learning how to communicate with your Deaf or Hard of Hearing child. Tips and strategies that parents can use to encourage language development and language facilitation with their child or children.

Resources from the Deaf Education Centres

Kelston and van Asch Deaf Education Centres both have catalogues listing various literacy and language resources such as DVDs, CD-rom, books etc.

- [Kelston Deaf Centre library](#)
- [van Asch Deaf Centre online shop](#)

Sign with your Baby: NZSL for Babies and Toddlers

This website is for parents, whānau, friends and teachers who want to start learning New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) to communicate with babies and toddlers. It shows the first signs and skills needed to communicate with children between 0 and 3 years old.

Go to the [Sign with your Baby website](#)

Note: This content was originally provided as a DVD, available free from Advisers of Deaf Children, Van Asch Deaf Education Centre, or Kelston Deaf Education Centre. Please contact us if you need help to source a copy of the DVD.



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Nursery rhymes in NZSL (App)

Rhymes with Sign features videos of Deaf New Zealanders sign-singing traditional nursery rhymes in New Zealand Sign Language. All the old favourites are included, like Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, Humpty Dumpty and lots more.

This app is available to download via www.rhymeswithsign.com

Financial assistance from DCNZ

Each year DCNZ recognises the top achievers throughout New Zealand with **Excellence Awards** from Year 1 to Year 13.

Anyone is welcome to nominate a child.

DCNZ can also provide assistance to subsidise the cost of:

- assistive technology for your child;
- private tutor for students studying towards NCEA;
- private Speech-Language Therapist; and
- NZ Sign Language classes for the whole family

Other opportunities include:

- Advanced learning scholarships for two post-secondary students; and
- Grants for Individuals and Parent Groups

Go to the [Get Funding page](#) on our website for application forms.

Contact Us

By post at PO Box 13266, Johnsonville, Wellington 6440.

Email info@deafchildren.org.nz

Call 0800 DEAFCHILD | (0800) 332 324

Text 027 214 6901

Go to www.deafchildren.org.nz

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