New grants for speech therapy and after-school tuition!

Children with hearing loss can now get one-on-one tuition not available through the public education system, under new grants agreed this week.

Deaf Children New Zealand (DCNZ), at its annual meeting in Auckland on Saturday, approved higher amounts for existing grants and extended the number of ways it offers support.

First, the dollar amounts have increased, and grants previously restricted to tutoring at NCEA level are now available right down to primary level.

DCNZ’s contribution towards out of school tutoring will now cover the core subjects of maths, reading and writing at primary level, in addition to those subjects and science at secondary schools. Sign language tuition continues to be available to all children (see below for more information on family help)

Funding also includes scholarships and help with purchasing assistive devices such as laptops, tablets and for older children, phones that are compatible with their hearing device. An area we have not previously funded but where we know there is much unmet need is access to speech language therapy. We are excited to announce we are now offering money towards these things. Information on how to apply and more details are on our website now/ will be available shortly. Our website now also has revamped forms that can be submitted online.

DCNZ president, Kate Whale, urged whanau to consider how the grants could help their children, including classes such as KipMcGrath and private speech therapists. “We are really excited to announce these changes, extra money to catch up with inflation and for speech and language therapy, where the cost is out of the reach of many families’ budgets,” she said.

“Offering tuition to all school-aged children will be welcomed by families who recognise their children need help to keep up with the curriculum from the start, rather than trying to play catch-up later, with all the effects that can have on confidence and self-esteem.”

Download current forms here or email info@deafchildren.org.nz to find out more information.
Deaf Children NZ is also investigating how we can best offer sign language tutoring to those surrounding our deaf children. “We’re interested to hear from parent groups as soon as possible to know whether they would see demand in their region and how best to allocate that funding,” said DCNZ president Kate Whale. “Potential ways would be group sessions set up by parent groups/ a group of families (potentially weekend timeframes), individual families applying for one-on-one tutoring, online classes for those in regions where sourcing tutors is hard, and/or funding tutors’ travel costs to those regions, or a mixture of any of those things depending on factors such as geography, individual needs in their area.”

Getting help early

How long did it take you to find our group? DCNZ is keen to improve its outreach to families at first diagnosis. Ideally referrals would be made to us straight after the first audiology appointment where a hearing issue is identified.

We feel strongly that the medical information needs to be followed quickly by that family support so parents, who are likely to have little/no family history of deafness, and who may be struggling to envisage what the future looks like for their child, can hear from people who have trodden that path.

We need professionals to see the value of that parent to parent contact.

Relay service

The service that allows people using New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) to phone others by using an interpreter will soon be available at weekends, the Government has announced.

The NZSL Video Interpreting Service provides an interpreter who translates to others on the phone or in person to friends and families, service organisations, doctors, in cafes and shops, etc “The Video Interpreting Service is the most in-demand government-funded relay service and we know user groups are keen for it to be made more available,” minister Kris Faafoi said. It is currently available 8am to 8pm on weekdays.

From July 1, this free service will also be available 10am – 5pm Saturday, 12pm – 5pm Sunday, and from 8am – 9pm Monday to Friday during May and November to support
American research show teachers need to give extra support to UHL children. Parents who are fully informed can advocate well for children with academic weakness, need of IEPs, and high rates of speech therapy. Here are some of the research findings:

- Poorer ability to listen and localize sound in noisy environment
  Even a very low level of noise is likely to interfere with hearing
- The first 2-word phrase occurs at 18 months for UHL versus 15 months for normal hearing (NH)
- Delays in auditory behavior were found in 21% (v 4% NH)
- Delays in preverbal vocalizations were found in 41% of UHL (v 2.6% NH)
- not correlated with the severity of the loss or side of UHL.
- Lower scores have been found for syntax and vocabulary

**Early childhood:** the mean total language score is 91.78, almost 10% lower than ‘average’. Converting this difference to age equivalence results in language delays of 6 months for children with UHL.

“Children with UHL do not catch up to the language level of their siblings over time”

**Preschoolers** ages 4-6 years were found to have poorer scores on the Children’s Home Inventory of Listening Difficulties [CHILD] checklist

**Impact of cognitive ability:** children with UHL who had a higher IQ (90+) had higher oral skills. Their oral skills improved over time (ages 6-12 years). Children with lower IQ (90 or less) did not improve or improved at a much slower rate in their oral skills over time. (Longitudinal study 2013).

**What difference does a unilateral hearing loss make?**

New research examines the classroom difficulties, speech outcomes, technology benefits and social effects

**Academic difficulties are apparent to the teacher:** Comparisons of SIFTER checklist scores for students with UHL compared to normal hearing:

Academics – 8 vs 11, Attention – 7.8 vs 12, Communication – 8 vs 11, Class Participation – 9 vs 12.5, School Behaviour – 11.5 vs 13.5.

**Quality of life:** On the HEAR-QL checklist, children with UHL scored substantially lower than NH (as in scores of 72-80 compared to NH scores of 95).

**Speech/Language Summary:** There is improvement over time, especially for children with 90+ IQs and those with 90 IQs or less who were on IEPs.

“Adults with UHL were 5 times more likely to report severe fatigue than adults with no hearing loss.”

Language delays and verbal IQ differences may widen with age and do not disappear.

**Cochlear implants for students with SSD:** The most improvement in speech understanding is in the first 3 months after implant activation. Words/sentence scores prior to implantation are about 5% correct. After 3 months they are 35 and 55%, and after 12 months 45 and 65%.

Finally – don’t despair! None of these outcomes are set in stone, let them inspire you to work with teachers to plan what will work with your child.

http://successforkidswithhearingloss.com/
A regular hearing aid makes sounds louder. A cochlear implant converts sound to electrical impulses and a bone anchored hearing aid converts sounds to vibrations.

The Ponto System is a hearing solution used to help children (and adults) with conductive and mixed hearing losses. For these children the cochlea, or sensory organ for hearing is working relatively well, but the sound is unable to move through the outer or middle ear easily. This may be due to microtia/atresia, glue ear or a problem with the middle ear bones.

The number of children affected by conductive and mixed hearing losses in NZ is high and we currently fit around 150 children a year with bone conduction devices.

The Ponto system bypasses the outer and middle ear by sending the sound directly to cochlea by vibration through a process known as bone conduction. It can fit losses at the cochlea of up to 65dB and can also be used to treat single sided deafness. Ponto System is a hearing solution used to help children (and adults) with conductive and mixed hearing losses. For these children the cochlea, or sensory organ for hearing is working relatively well, but the sound is unable to move through the outer or middle ear easily. This may be due to microtia/atresia, glue ear or a problem with the middle ear bones.

Young children wear the Ponto Sound Processor on a softband or connected to a cap. Unfortunately, some of the sound is absorbed by the skin, therefore when a child is old enough, about 5, they move from a softband to the surgical solution.

Andrea Pittman, of Arizona State University, compared the Ponto device on a softband with a Ponto on an abutment. Children in the study were asked to learn 6 novel (nonsense) words and pair them with a novel picture. She found children learn new words **2.5 x faster** using an implant than using the softband despite the fact their hearing tests look the same.

The sound quality through the bone is superior than through the skin and this supports the children in their learning.
Now available in epub format - free to download! 'Different is Beautiful' is the first in our children's storybook series and explores the life of a deaf girl through the eyes of her teddy bear.

Visit the Roots Resources website for this and other books: https://www.wits.ac.za/centre-for-deaf-studies/roots-resources/

Contact us:
kate@deafchildren.org.nz
newsletter: gill@deafchildren.org.nz
https://www.facebook.com/nzfdc/deafchildren.org.nz

Parent groups

Deaf Children New Zealand is affiliated to the National Foundation for the Deaf Inc
Parent to Parent New Zealand supports families and whanau
Magnet Deaf Youth represents Deaf and hearing impaired youth.

Links to all our parent groups can be found here and we are always keen to support people to start a group in regions where there is not one presently. Auckland Parents of Deaf Children has a new website, packed with information -- check it out here

Accounting

DCNZ is investigating the possibilities of moving from our current accountant/auditor and is interested in hearing from parent groups about what they do and if they see any synergies in DCNZ and parent groups using the same firm. Each group would still keep their accounts separate, but we could look at whether there are economies of scale/ a current firm that comes recommended to see if there is reason to come together in this way.

Special donation

We were moved by the story of one young girl – Sophie, aged seven, who saw a campaign to support deaf children in New Zealand in her Kids National Geographic magazine. She decided to donate her saved pocket money to DCNZ through Givealittle.

Isn’t this so sweet! We would love for this thoughtful wee girl to get in contact so we can thank her in person... fingers crossed!

Contact us:
kate@deafchildren.org.nz
newsletter: gill@deafchildren.org.nz
https://www.facebook.com/nzfdc/deafchildren.org.nz

For sign language resources, take a look at https://nzsl.vuw.ac.nz/ and the NZSL Online Dictionary which is handy for putting together vocabulary sheets to print out for books for the kids, teachers and around the home.

For younger children, the Rhymes with Sign app comes recommended and http://www.nzslsigninja.co.nz/is great for older kids http://nzslbabysign.nz/ and https://turitv.ezystream.com/#/ have sign language resources. There is also a massive resource base in http://www.handsandvoices.org/