

## ABSTRACTS

FRIDAY, MAY 17th

MAIN-CONFERENCE

## THEATRE HALL

### Dr. Jan Van Dijk Memorial Keynote Let each child unfold

#### Authors:

Johannes Fellingner (Institute for Neurology of Senses and Language, Austria)

Ivana Marinac (Otorhinolaryngologist, Croatia)

#### Abstract:

This heading might have covered Jan van Dijk's life and is the title and mission of the Jan van Dijk lecture with its two parts:

In the first part Johannes Fellingner, neuropsychiatrist and child neurologist, will tell how following the mother of a deafblind boy led to a friendship with Jan van Dijk for over 20 years. Key elements of Jan van Dijk's legacy will be highlighted and reflected especially with respect to their impact for families with children who are deaf and have special needs.

In the second part Ivana Marinac who has been born with Treacher Collins Syndrome herself will report how she became a distinguished ENT specialist and how her parents supported her in unfolding her potential.

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### Children's Exploratory Behaviors and Parent Guidance during Shared Experiences

#### Author:

Rain Bosworth (National Technical Institute of Technology, US)

#### Abstract:

Compelled by curiosity and a desire to learn, children naturally explore. Hands-on object exploration is important for building vocabulary and knowledge about how the world works, especially during shared discovery with caregivers who often provide guidance. Among children who are born deaf, a large majority may experience long-term learning delays because of early lack of access to ambient language, even with audiological intervention. This milieu may impact how deaf children explore. Moreover, children who rely on visual-manual signed languages for communication may have different ways of exploring for learning, compared to children who rely on speech for communication. This talk will present ongoing research conducted in the NTID PLAY Lab that describes the quality, depth and frequency of children's exploratory behaviors. We also examine how parents guide their children's exploratory behaviors. We hypothesize that deaf signing children have unique exploratory behaviors that are adaptive and that parents have unique intuitive ways of guiding their child's exploration but some guidance behaviors may be more or less helpful for children's exploration. By the end of this talk, we will have a better understanding of the importance of child's exploration and parent guidance on child's learning. We will consider the possible ways that deafness and signed language experience may impact children's free and structured sensorimotor exploratory behaviors in various settings -- a classroom with

peers, free exploration in a museum, cooperative interaction with a parent, and structured physical manipulation of a toy set.

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### Possible Beings: DHH Children and the Right to Communication

**Authors:**

Kristin Snoddon (School of Early Childhood Studies Toronto Metropolitan University, Canada)

**Abstract:**

This presentation discusses the right to communication for DHH children with a focus on the recent case of *Carter Churchill v. Newfoundland and Labrador English School District*. Carter is a deaf child with cerebral palsy who uses American Sign Language as a first language. At seven months of age, he received bilateral cochlear implants. However, only auditory-verbal therapy (AVT) was made available as a language development service option. This situation is true of many other early intervention service contexts worldwide where cochlear implants and AVT have become the standard of care for DHH children. Carter's parents filed a human rights complaint alleging that he experienced discrimination on the basis of disability in the delivery of early intervention and educational services. This was due to the failure of educational authorities to accommodate Carter's sign language needs. On March 1, 2023 the Human Rights Commission of Newfoundland and Labrador's Board of Inquiry decision was released that found the school district failed to provide reasonable accommodation and discriminated against Carter during the first four years of his education. However, this decision stops short of meeting the right to communication for all DHH children. For this right to be enacted, there is a need for relational linguistic continuity wherein deaf children and their families can access human relations and interactions in sign language with a robust and enduring community of sign language users. Collaboration between FCEI professionals, parents, and deaf communities is therefore essential.

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### The Human Right to a Family Language

**Authors:**

Joseph J. Murray (Professor of Deaf Studies at Gallaudet University, US)

**Abstract:**

Families with deaf children are very quickly confronted with the need to address a unique issue: the languages the families and the deaf child will use. The right to language is a forgotten human right, one overlooked in the presumption that all children have unfettered access to language. Unfortunately this is not always true for deaf children. This keynote will present the human rights case for the right to language for deaf children and their families, highlighting examples of family-centered language acquisition from around the world. This keynote will also discuss international best practices in inclusive education for deaf children. Such best practices ensure deaf children's' educational environment promotes their maximal social and academic development, as per international human rights conventions.

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### DLIA Panel Discussion

## Deaf Adults in Early Intervention: Connect, Communicate, Collaborate

### Authors:

Facilitator Elaine Gale (CUNY Hunter College, US),  
Presenters Karen Hopkins (The Children's Center for Communication Beverly School for the Deaf, US),  
Richard Doku (Ghana National Association of the Deaf, Ghana),  
Cheryl Spykerman (Child and Youth team leader, New Zealand)

### Abstract:

Research shows families feel empowered by meeting deaf adults, and importantly, early in their journey. In recognizing the importance of partnerships in FCEI, this panel focuses on ways to build sustainable systems to provide families support implementing updated FCEI Principles to infuse deaf adults. Richard Doku from Ghana will share his collaboration experiences as a professional teacher and sign language officer of Ghana National Association of the Deaf to support the Early Care and Education of Deaf Children (ECE). Karen Hopkins from the United States will share her connection experiences as an Early Intervention Detection and Intervention (EHDI) coordinator and director for an early intervention program. Cheryl Spykerman from New Zealand will share her communication experiences as a Deaf Aotearoa First Signs facilitator and team leader. Learn from different countries' experiences and resources as deaf professionals share how deaf and hearing researchers, practitioners and parents connect, communicate and collaborate.

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## What changes outcomes for deaf and hard of hearing children? Learning from the LOCHI Study

### Authors:

Greg Leigh (NextSense Institute, Australia)

### Abstract:

Developments in multiple fields over several decades have created the opportunity for vastly improved developmental, educational, and social-emotional outcomes for deaf and hard of hearing children. Among advances in fields such as linguistics (including the linguistics of sign languages), psychology, audiology, and education, have been two outstanding developments that continue to shape more positive outcomes for children. The introduction of programs of Universal Newborn Hearing Screening (UNHS) and the increasing availability and accessibility of cochlear implantation have fundamentally changed the nature of expected outcomes for deaf and hard of hearing children.

This presentation describes and discusses findings from the Longitudinal Outcomes of Children with Hearing Impairment (LOCHI) Study, which includes more than 450 deaf and hard of hearing Australian children whose hearing losses were identified variously through newborn hearing screening or later paths to confirmation and intervention. Discussion will focus on outcomes in language and communication development, literacy, and social and emotional development; the factors that influence and impact those outcomes; and the implications of those findings for practice in early intervention and school education.

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## [International Research](#)

## Harnessing European Funds for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) Children: Insights from the SILENT Project's Best Practice

### Authors:

Katja Lenič Šalamun, Emma Steinbock (InterAktion, Verein für ein interkulturelles Zusammenleben, Austria)

Petra Rezar, Andreja Trtnik (The Association of Teachers of the Deaf of Slovenia)

### Abstract:

In 2021 in Austria parents of deaf children initiated a project to additionally support families navigating the challenges of raising a deaf or hard-of-hearing child. This initiative evolved into a European project named "SILENT" (Strengthening Language skills, communication competencies, and ENhancing resilience of hearing parents of deaf children), which secured funding through the Erasmus+ programme.

The primary objective of the SILENT project is to develop educational materials accessible to all family members - parents, siblings, and grandparents of deaf children. These materials include free educational resources, instructional videos introducing the basics of sign language for effective communication with a deaf child (approximately 100 words in Austrian, Portuguese, Slovenian, Cypriot, Macedonian Sign Language), picture books, and an online platform available in multiple languages: English, Slovenian, German, Portuguese, Greek, and Macedonian.

The core focus of the SILENT project is to address the need for language acquisition, be it spoken or sign language, for deaf children. Additionally, the project aims to establish effective family communication, by educating and empowering all family members, enabling them to provide an inclusive, nurturing, and anxiety-free environment crucial for early childhood development.

Through the lens of the SILENT project, we aim to showcase the possibilities of effectively utilizing European funds to support parents' initiatives. During the presentation, we will shed light on the eligibility criteria and requirements to access Erasmus+ funds. Furthermore, we will emphasize the types of projects and initiatives that align with European priorities and goals, illustrating the potential impact of such funding. Additionally, we will discuss strategies for fostering collaborations and partnerships with various organizations, NGOs, and governmental bodies. These collaborative efforts will not only enhance the impact of projects but also improve eligibility for European funding, maximizing the support available to families in need.

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## Roundtable on international collaborations in longitudinal developmental research of young DHH children

### Authors:

Valerie Sung (Murdoch Children's Research Institute, Royal Children's Hospital, University of Melbourne, Australia)

Evelien Dirks (NSDSK, The Netherlands)

Chris Margaret Aanondsen (St. Olavs Hospital, Trondheim University Hospital, Norway)

Magdalena Dall, Daniel Holzinger (Research Institute for Developmental Medicine, JKU, Austria)

### Abstract:

The developmental trajectories of deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) children and the associated modifiable predictors of development are still poorly understood. This is due to the low prevalence and large heterogeneity of childhood hearing loss. International research collaboration is essential to achieve adequate sample size and power of research cohorts to facilitate the understanding of developmental trajectories of DHH children. However, in reality international multi-centre collaboration is rare.

The international discussants in this roundtable (Australia, Netherlands, Austria, Norway) with a variety of professional backgrounds (pediatrics, psychology, public health, clinical linguistics) are all engaged in exploring developmental trajectories of young DHH children in their respective countries. The collaboration started with the alignment of outcomes measures and a piloted collaboration on pooling data on outcomes of children with connexin-26 hearing loss. One of the discussants is at the stage of setting up a national research program using the internationally established batteries of measurements.

The panel will discuss the motivation for beginning international collaboration, current common research themes and variations in child hearing loss research and enablers and barriers to international collaborations. Cross-cultural experiences with completed research will be shared. Other topics concern future topics for international collaborations and practical ways to strengthen and evolve the research networks over the next years.

The audience is invited to participate in the roundtable exchange.

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### [FCEI guidelines and practice](#)

#### [A User-Friendly Guide to the Updated FCEI Guiding Principles](#)

**Authors:**

Janet DesGeorges (Hands&Voices, USA, GPODHH)

Gwen Carr (University College London Ear Institute, UK)

**Background:** In 2013, a diverse, multidisciplinary panel of experts published a consensus statement on evidence-based Principles guiding family-centered early intervention (FCEI) for children who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH; Moeller, et al., 2013). These principles were updated and published in the Fall of 2023 (Oxford University Press). A group of professionals and parents have come together to create a User-Friendly Guide to these principles that could be used by parent advocates and others in a succinct format to assist in the implementation and understanding of the new Guidelines.

**Methods, Results/Aims:** This User-Friendly Guide Seeks to:

- Help individuals understand recommended practices for Early intervention.
- Help to assess services based on the principles recommended by an expert consensus group.
- Empower families to advocate for appropriate services.
- Improve partnerships with Early Intervention Providers and other stakeholders.

**Conclusions:** This presentation will share the process, development, and dissemination of this guide, in an interactive format with participants.

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#### [Share Your \(Strategy\) Screen: The 3 C's of Partnership and Program Enrichment](#)

**Authors:**

Jenna Voss (Fontbonne University, Communication Disorders & Deaf Education, USA),

Djenne-amal Morris (NC-LEND at University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, USA)

**Abstract:**

Communication, Connection and Collaboration (Three Cs) are the seeds to any successful strategy. The Three C's are critical for driving systems change for DHH individuals, parents, and practitioners when working together across geographic and professional boundaries. Studies have shown that utilizing a 'strategy screen approach' is a useful tool to organizational growth and best practice. "A

Strategy Screen is a set of questions that specifically reflect your organization's strategic priorities. Each question views a decision through the perspective of a stated organizational goal or value. Think of it as a tool that keeps you focused on the things that best serve your organization's culture, priorities, and future." (ARTS Midwest, Nov 2022)

Presenters will offer a FCEI-DHH focused "strategy screen" which participants will personalize for their own organizations in order to guide organizational decision making, prioritization of resources, and fostering of key relationships. Examples of the strategy screen questions include: Do members of the group feel they are being used to their full capacity? How are they being underused? How are they not being heard? How are we closing the communication gap to ensure in-group members are aware of the work being done? Who holds the power of decision making?

In this session, small groups of participants will work through case studies to see how a strategy screen can be used to clarify organizational decision making. Finally, presenters and participants will commit to engaging in an ongoing professional learning community, by sharing their personalized strategy screens and connecting with resources beyond the conference. In addition, the presenters will offer continued collaboration and support to foster the implementation of these practices within their respective organizations.

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## SEMINAR ROOM 1

### Bimodality and DHH role models in FCEI

#### Family ASL: Research in Support of Family Bimodal Bilingual Development

##### **Authors:**

Deborah Chen Pichler (Gallaudet University),  
Elaine Gale, Patrice Creamer (Hunter College),  
Diane Lilo-Martin (University of Connecticut),  
Jilian Schroeder (parent of Deaf/Hoh Child)  
USA

##### **Abstract:**

**Background:** The Family ASL project investigates bimodal bilingual development at the family level, documenting both deaf children's acquisition of English and ASL (American Sign Language), as well as their hearing parents' sign language acquisition. Our approach allows us to provide individualized ASL support from a Deaf ASL specialist and yields detailed information about each family's bimodal bilingual journey.

**Methods:** Our project pairs families with a deaf ASL specialist who meets with them regularly over Zoom to provide ASL support customized to each family's needs. Here we share the experiences of families through the testimony of one mother and results from exit interviews with other families. Our goal is to support families according to the *FCEI Best Practices in Family-Centered Early Intervention* (Moeller et al. 2013). We work closely with families in tailoring our services to family needs (Principle 2), and we provide a language-rich experience for both parents and children (Principle 5). Additionally, we monitor progress (Principle 9) through multiple measures of child development in ASL and English, as well as parents' development of ASL.

**Results/Aims:** Families had varied starting points at the beginning of our study, but all progressed in their ASL proficiency over the course of the year. Motives for learning ASL generally reflected their desire to provide their children early access to language and entry into a community of signers.

**Conclusions:** Researchers interested in language development can support families in their path to

raising bimodal bilingual children by including services from deaf and hearing professionals. While our research objective is bimodal bilingual acquisition, we are committed to prioritizing family perspectives, which ultimately benefits both science and practice.

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### Project of home guidance services in Flanders 'introducing DHH role models'

#### Authors:

Sara Van Leuven (Sint-Lievenspoort, Thuisbegeleidingsdienst), Caroline Stevens (KOCA, Thuisbegeleidingsdienst), Vanessa Lopes Ferreira Abreu (Thuisbegeleidingsdienst)  
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#### Abstract:

Through a Flemish governmental call for a pilot phase in welfare, the five Flemish Home Guidance Services (HGS) for DHH persons have the opportunity to develop and implement a new and sustainable standard for family-centered intervention. Each service employs one or more deaf(blind)/hard of hearing employees with a variable degree of sign language fluency. We aim to provide DHH families and their network with complete and neutral information about educating DHH children and everything this entails and to involve DHH-qualified experts in this process. We believe this is essential in empowering DHH individuals to make informed decisions in their lives and actively participate in society.

Led by a growth mindset, we adapt our interventions to the family's pace to create exposure, as there is no fixed mindset or timetable to make families come to terms with their child's deafness. Depending on the family's needs, we organize duo guidances with a hearing and a DHH colleague, solo interventions by the DHH-qualified experts, or group activities. The diverse array of group-led activities responds to the needs from childhood to adulthood. We focus on deaf awareness, self-advocacy, social-emotional well-being, and development. We also offer outreach possibilities to encourage collaborative teamwork between professionals and the broader network of DHH and their families, childcare, schools, and others seeking to grow in inclusion and deaf awareness. The DHH colleagues are an equal part of the HGS. To empower themselves as deaf professionals in a historically grown hearing professional world and to reflect on this new work position, we created opportunities for all DHH colleagues to collaborate and support each other, to engage in intervision and training opportunities, to receive hearing as well as deaf led supervision, and to develop the pilot phase into a sustainable guidance program collectively.

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## SEMINAR ROOM 3

### Early Social Communication

#### What I would like to say to you: Pragmatic skills in deaf and hard-of-hearing children

#### Authors:

Loes Wauters (Royal Kentalis, Radoud University, Behavioural Science Institute),  
Rosanne van der Zee (The Dutch Foundation of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Child (NSDSK),  
Evelien Dirks (NSDSK, Utrecht University)  
The Netherlands

#### Abstract:

**Background:** Pragmatics refers to the use of language in social interactions. Pragmatic skills are the skills to adjust your language to the goal, situation, and communication partner in an interaction. These skills enable a child to participate in social activities, at home and in school. Pragmatic skills are related to cognitive, social-emotional and academic skills.

In the present study, we investigate the pragmatic skills of deaf and hard-of-hearing (DHH) children in the Netherlands. In addition, we study how parents and professionals experience the use of the Pragmatics Checklist (Goberis et al., 2012), because currently a questionnaire to assess pragmatic skills in young children is unavailable in The Netherlands.

**Methods:** The Pragmatics Checklist was translated to Dutch and filled out by 30 parents of DHH children and 250 parents of hearing children, aged 2 to 6 years. In addition, parents filled out an evaluation of the checklist. Also, 5 professionals reflected on the use of the checklist in a focus group.

**Results:** Preliminary analyses show some differences between DHH and typically hearing children, mainly in the areas of *stating needs* and *interaction*. In this presentation we will elaborate on the similarities and differences between the two groups of children.

As for the evaluation of the checklist, parents reported that the questions are clear and not too difficult. They were also positive about the time it took to fill out the checklist. Parents of DHH children indicate that the list is valuable for early intervention and are willing to fill out this checklist in the future.

**Conclusions:** The Pragmatics Checklist seems to be functional for studying pragmatics skills in young DHH children in family centred early intervention. Results of this study further indicate areas in the pragmatic development that professionals can focus on.

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## Family ASL: Mini-Lessons on Visual Communication Strategies for Optimal Language Learning

### Authors:

Elaine Gale, Patrice Creamer (Hunter College, USA)

### Abstract:

Best Practice Principle 5, Family Infant Interaction, focuses on families and providers working together to create optimal environments for language learning. One strategy for creating optimal learning environments for language learning is the use of visual communication strategies. For deaf and hard of hearing children, a factor to building a strong language foundation is having access to a visual language as early as possible. This is supported with studies that show deaf and hard of hearing children who have access to language visually from deaf parents have positive language outcomes (Davidson et al., 2014; Hassanzadeh, 2012; Yoshinaga-Itano et al., 2017). Because hearing parents with deaf and hard of hearing children are less likely to meet their children's visual communication needs, they can benefit from visual communication training and support (Jamieson, 1994; Mohay, 2000; Waxman & Spencer, 1997; Willie et al., 2019; Willie et al., 2020). As a strategy to support families with using visual communication, a Deaf ASL specialist, who worked with families involved in a study investigating hearing parents learning to sign with their deaf toddlers, taught minilessons on visual strategies outlined in a tip sheet created by Deaf Leadership International Alliance (DLIA) on research based visual strategies deaf adults use with young children. This presentation highlights visual communication strategies as an important factor to create optimal language learning environments for young children who are deaf discussing why and how to incorporate visual communication strategies in interactions. Examples of mini-lessons on visual communication strategies that families and professionals can implement to support deaf and hard of hearing children's language development will be shared.

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## Co-regulation – parent-child interaction - self-regulation – emotions- behavior

### Authors:

Nikki Smit, Evelien Dirks (NSDSK, The Netherlands)  
Hedwig van Bakel (Tranzo Tilburg University, The Netherlands)  
Amy Szarkowski (The Children's Center For Communication/ Beverly School for the Deaf, and Institute for Community Inclusion, University of Massachusetts Boston, USA)  
Anat Zaidman-Zait (Tel Aviv University, Israel)

### Abstract:

When growing up children learn to regulate their behaviors and emotions. In the early years parents play an important role in this through a process called co-regulation. In this process, parents help their children to calm by soothing, holding, connecting and communicating. Although we know that parent involvement with their child is important for child development, it is not yet known what the process of co-regulation entails for DHH children and their parents. This project aims to fill this gap by better understanding parent and child factors that are related to co-regulation.

This presentation will introduce the Calming Together research project that explores co-regulation during daily situations (e.g., mealtime, bedtime, and playtime) in lives of families in young children who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH). Understanding of the process of co-regulation will be increased through the use of observations, 360° video recordings, sleep monitoring, parent questionnaires about their children's behavioral patterns and emotional development, and play-based activities. The project aims to include fathers as well as mothers, parents who themselves are DHH and have typical hearing, and both DHH children with and without additional needs.

Connections among FCEI professionals, parents of DHH children (both parents with typical hearing and DHH) and researchers have informed the project and will remain in Communication throughout the project. This project is an international research Collaboration among researchers from the Netherlands, Israel, and the United States of America.

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## Stimulating Theory of Mind: an early intervention

### Authors:

Nadine de Rue (Royal Dutch Kentalis, The Netherlands),  
Lizet Ketelaar, Evelien Dirks, Eva de Boer (Dutch Foundation for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Child (NSDSK), The Netherlands)

### Abstract:

Theory of Mind (ToM) plays a key role in children's social-emotional development and in establishing friendships. Previous studies indicate that parental mental state talk (i.e. talking about thoughts and feelings) is related to ToM development in both typically hearing and DHH children. Fostering DHH children's ToM development from an early age on is essential, because of the challenges they often face in this area. A parent-based Dutch early intervention called 'Taal voor ToM' (*Language for ToM*) has been developed to enhance DHH children's ToM development. The goal of this intervention is to guide parents in using more mental state talk (spoken or signed) in daily interactions with their DHH child (2,5 to 5 years old).

We investigate the effect of the Language for Tom intervention on both parent and child outcomes. All FCEI centers for DHH children in the Netherlands collaborated in this study. FCEI practitioners of all centers were trained in providing the intervention to parents of DHH children. The intervention consists of three group sessions in which parents are informed about ToM and mental state language, and they practice using mental state language.

To examine the effect of the intervention families were assessed at home prior and after the intervention. Video recordings of parent-child interaction during free play and storybook reading

were made to examine the amount and diversity of used mental state language. Children's ToM skills were assessed using several tasks, and parents filled out a questionnaire about emotion communication and their child's emotion vocabulary.

Preliminary results of 45 DHH children and their parents will be presented and discussed. Findings indicate that parents who participated in the intervention talked more about emotions after the intervention, and they positively evaluated the intervention.

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## SEMINAR ROOM 4

### Linguistic and cultural diversity

#### Supporting Collaborative Practices in FCEI: EI Professional-Family-Interpreter Dynamics when Spoken Language Interpreters are members of the Early Intervention Team

##### **Authors:**

Kathryn Crowe (University of Iceland, Iceland; Charles Sturt University, Australia; Rochester Institute of Technology, USA)

Cassandra Hooper (Charles Sturt University, Australia)

Mark Guilberson (University of Wyoming, USA)

Suzanne Hopf (Charles Sturt University, Fiji)

##### **Abstract:**

**Background:** When parents and professionals do not speak the same language, an interpreter is an integral member of the FCEI team. This project was initiated based on reports of breakdowns in effective FCEI provision when spoken language interpreters (i.e., English-Spanish, not English-ASL) were involved. This paper reports on the initial stage of an international, interdisciplinary project that aims to understand and support the collaborative practices of education/health professionals, families of children with hearing loss, and spoken language interpreters in EI contexts.

**Method:** Ninety people participated in an online survey in Australia collecting the experiences of EI professionals with experience using spoken language interpreters in EI settings and spoken language interpreters with/without experience working in an EI setting for children with hearing loss. EI professionals included EI educators, teachers of the deaf, speech-language pathologists, and audiologists (among others). Spoken language interpreters worked between English and a wide range of other spoken languages (Arabic, Cantonese, Chaldean, Czech, Dari, Dinka, Farsi, Finnish, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Kurdish, Mandarin, Matu, Nepali, Nuer, Slovak, Spanish, and Vietnamese). Questions allowed for quantitative (i.e., Likert scale) and qualitative (open-ended) data analysis.

**Results:** Participants identified key information that needed to be shared prior to a session, including key terminology in both English and the language of the family and the family's language skills and usage. EI professionals reported that often qualified interpreters were not used in sessions due to a range of constraints. Thematic analysis of participants experiences in EI sessions (as either an EI professional or interpreter) focused on session elements such as briefing, procedural skills and prior knowledge, and environmental influences.

**Conclusions:** There is a need to create best-practice resources to support effective professional-family-interpreter collaboration in FCEI contexts. This research is an initial step to developing a freely available, user-generated, evidence-based resource to fulfil this need.

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### Supporting communication among young deaf children and their caregivers in diverse language contexts

**Authors:**

Ruth Swanwick, Elettra Casellato, Nathalie Czeke (University of Leeds, School of Education, UK), Daniel Fobi (University of Education, Department of Special Education, UK)

**Abstract:**

**Background:** In this paper we describe the development of approaches to the early support of young deaf children and their caregivers that are sensitive to different cultural contexts of childhood, caregiving, and language and communication practices. This discussion is informed by three collaborative research studies that examined the language and communication needs of young deaf children and their caregivers in different multilingual contexts in the UK and Ghana (Africa). Led by the University of Leeds, one study involved a collaboration with education and health practitioners, and deaf leaders in Ghana and the other two involved a collaboration with the Yorkshire Auditory Implant Service.

**Methods:** The research combined ethnographic (interview, questionnaire and observation) and multimodal video-based data gathering and analysis techniques to examine the language learning context and behaviours of young deaf children, the experience of caregivers, and the perspectives of education and health practitioners and deaf community leaders.

**Results:** The diverse language resources and communication practices among young deaf children and their caregivers are shaped by the development environment and wider language and socio-cultural context. These insights inform the development of intervention strategies including the production of video-based multilingual materials for caregivers and early year's practitioners. The impact of this work is already evident in Ghana following a dissemination programme across schools for the deaf and training institutions.

**Conclusions:** The combined use of ethnographic and situated multilingual and multimodal research and assessment approaches can provide rich and reliable information about individual communicative repertoires in their given context. These approaches also extend the inclusivity of deaf early childhood research and enhance the granularity of analysis needed to inform contextually appropriate early intervention. The resulting new knowledge-base extends Western epistemologies that are currently leading models of early intervention and support.

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### **Family support and/or decision making**

#### **Cultural and linguistical diversity in early hearing detection and intervention programs: Family and service provider perspectives**

**Authors:**

Hayley Wong, Jane Sheehan, Valerie Sung, Stephanie Best, Greg Leigh (Macquarie University, Murdoch Children's Research Institute, Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne, NextSense Institute, Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, University of Melbourne, Australia)

**Abstract:**

**Background/Aims:** Few studies have investigated the challenges for families from CALD backgrounds in accessing the hearing screening and diagnostic components of Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) programs. This study explored the experiences of families from CALD backgrounds in their engagement with the Victorian Infant Hearing Screening Program (VIHSP) and Victorian diagnostic audiology services. Specifically, the aims of this study were to (a) examine factors experienced by families from CALD backgrounds that enabled or impeded their engagement in hearing screening and diagnostic audiology services, and (b) explore service providers' experiences of supporting families from CALD backgrounds.

**Methods:** We conducted an exploratory qualitative study using semi-structured interviews with both families and service providers. Data were analysed using inductive content analysis.

**Results:** Thirteen parents and twelve service providers participated. Overall, parents expressed satisfaction with the services provided, and reported that using interpreters, having family support, and seeking additional resources from the Internet enabled engagement in services. Lack of interpreters, parental emotions and anxiety, lack of family support and logistics (e.g., transportation) were all barriers that families encountered in accessing services. Service providers identified several issues that resulted in differences in service delivery, communication, and support needs for families from CALD backgrounds, compared with families from English-speaking backgrounds. Perceived barriers included communication difficulties, cultural factors and external influences, logistical and financial concerns, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Conclusions:** Parents and service providers reported different barriers and enablers to engaging with hearing screening and diagnostic audiology services. Findings from this study will inform the provision of support services throughout the infant hearing screening and diagnostic pathway for families from CALD backgrounds.

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## Indigenous Family Gatherings to better inform Intervention Practice for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children

### Authors:

Norreen Simmons, Chairmaine Francis, Carolyn Hawrish, Dyan Spear  
(BC Family Hearing Resource Society, Canada)

### Abstract:

**Background:** In the past three years, BC Family Hearing Resource Society (BCFHRS) has provided Early Intervention Services to approximately 3% of Indigenous Deaf and Hard of Hearing children and families in British Columbia and the Yukon. We recognize that Indigenous families are underrepresented in Early Intervention services and many do not initiate services. Those that do often do not continue with them. To better reach and serve Indigenous families, we must first understand the barriers to their inclusion and explore its impact on the service delivery.

**Methods:** Family gatherings were held over two days with Indigenous families and their Deaf/Hard of Hearing children, Indigenous leaders, and professionals from BCFHRS. Families shared their stories of experiences with their interventionists, assessment sessions and treatment practices. Responses of families were captured artistically via graphic recordings by an Indigenous artist.

**Results:** Families shared their understanding of Early Intervention practices that were captured as themes. Themes included barriers to understanding the process and access to intervention services and strategies for inclusion with services. Some of the main themes included taking time to listen to their stories, prioritizing and understanding the family and child's needs over interventionist's agenda, including extended family as they form an essential part of a support system, building relationships through patience, and not giving up on them. Also discussed was the importance of supporting families holistically, creating safe spaces to share knowledge, and gathering a community of people who feel welcomed and heard.

**Conclusions:** To engage Indigenous families with Early Intervention services and to reduce/remove barriers to service delivery, an intercultural understanding of trust and partnerships is critical. Once a mutual relationship has been established, services need to be tailored and designed with the Indigenous community for the Indigenous community.

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THEATRE HALL

**Fostering Joy: Connecting Families, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Leaders, and Professionals;  
Communicating about Joy and Resilience; & Collaborating to Support Child Family Interactions**

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**Abstract:**

**Fostering Joy** supports the deliberate and conscious practice of looking for and encouraging joyful moments between families and their children who are deaf or hard of hearing (D/HH). Families, professionals, and D/HH leaders are invited to collectively shift from "mitigating the challenges of raising and supporting children who are D/HH" to intentionally celebrating children who are D/HH, their growth, and the many positive impacts they have on our lives. The *Fostering Joy* movement recognizes that pleasurable, loving family-child connections are essential and strives to support these at its core. Through the sharing of their own lived experiences and backgrounds, the presenters will describe how an emphasis on joy influences their FCEI-D/HH related work in their respective roles as a parent leader, a D/HH leader, and a professional, and as individuals. This presentation will explore cultural implications of "joy" and will offer ideas for applications of *Fostering Joy* that can be useful around the globe. Informed by science, this presentation will provide information about the practice of intentionally focusing on joy and gratitude. Actionable steps to increase one's attention to joy will be shared. Leave feeling inspired to pursue and encourage joy in your life, your work, and your collaborative efforts. Become a Joy Ambassador and join the international joy movement!

**Overall Goals/Objectives:** At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to:

1. Describe a minimum of 2 reasons why "fostering joy" can be useful to families with children who are D/HH (including children who are D/HH and have disabilities or "D/HH Plus").
2. List at least 2 "science-based facts" about joy.
3. Identify 2 or more "action steps" that he/she/they might take to increase joyful interactions between families and their children who are D/HH, whether family members, D/HH leaders, and/or professionals.

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