



International Week of Sign Languages



During the celebration of the International Day of Sign Languages, the world will once again highlight the unity generated by our sign languages. Deaf communities and organizations maintain their collective efforts - hand in hand - in fostering, promoting and recognizing national sign languages as part of their countries' vibrant and diverse linguistic landscapes.

-World Federation of the Deaf

DeafPlus

Deaf and hard of hearing individuals with additional disabilities are referred to as "Deaf Plus" or "Deaf+". Deaf children with one or more co-occurring disabilities could also be referred to as hearing level plus additional disabilities or Deafness and Diversity. About 40–50% of deaf children experience one or more additional disabilities, with learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, and visual impairments being the four most concomitant disabilities. Approximately 7–8% of deaf children have a learning disability. Deaf plus individuals utilize various language modalities to best fit their communication needs.

40-50%

of deaf children experience one or more additional disabilities



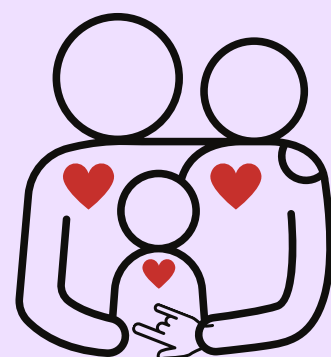
Language



Deaf plus individuals utilize a variety of language options such as spoken language, signed language, and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). Deaf plus individuals may also utilize nonsymbolic expression such as facial expressions, gestures, and body movements.

Language Acquisition

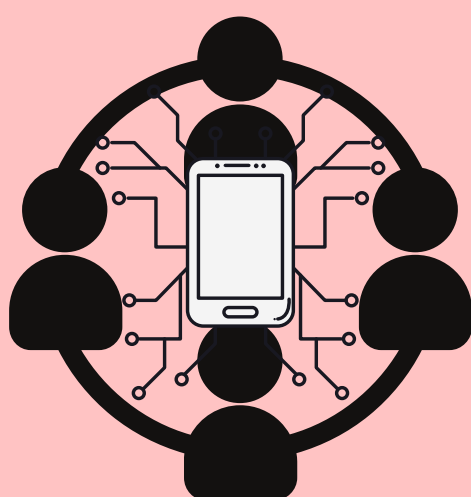
Acquisition of sign language from birth from fluent sign language models is critical to the cognitive and social development of all deaf children. A strong language foundation is necessary to learn other languages. As many deaf children are born into families who are not yet fluent in their native sign languages, services must be in place to provide sign language learning and support to families so that they can learn and use their native sign languages.



90-95%

the great majority —90 to 95 percent—of deaf and hard of hearing children are born to hearing parents

Methodologies and Technologies



The blending of methodologies and technologies is often required as communication is tailored for each child. Receptive language may rely on one communication system while expressive language may be strongest in another. For example, a child may be a good hearing aid user and rely on audition for receptive language, but may need sign for expressive language.