

Language stimulation at home

This TEDI resource sheet offers some strategies and resources that could be used by **parents/caregivers** of D/deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHOH) children to stimulate language use and development at home.

To learn language, children must hear or see it and have opportunities to communicate. Many DHOH children are being deprived of language stimulation sessions as a result of enforced social isolation during the pandemic. This may increase the potential for language delays, but also affect your child's behaviour, social interaction, skills development and self-esteem. Signing children may be at particular risk of language deprivation if family members are unable to sign.

Stimulating sign and spoken language

Teach language in everyday contexts

- Demonstrate directions and check for understanding
- Talk about what you are doing and describe ongoing actions
- Describe what others are doing
- Talk about current events
- Discuss something you have seen or heard on the news

Follow their lead

- Talk about your child's interests
- Give choices: 'Would you like ... or ...?'
- Ask open-ended questions that require more than a 'yes'/'no' response (Where...? What...? Why...? When...?)

Read to your child

- Speak clearly and let your child see the print/picture while you are reading
- Emphasise key words and concepts
- Allow time for processing information and check for understanding

Have fun!

- Singing is a great way to learn language
- Explore something new with your child
- Be silly and get your child's attention in an unexpected way
- Sabotage a situation so that your child needs to ask you for help
- Be forgetful so that your child needs to ask for something they need

Resolving communication breakdowns

Everyone mishears or misunderstands things some of the time. Children with hearing loss need to know that they must tell people when they do not understand something and need it repeated or rephrased.

Managing anxiety

Parents/caregivers need to be aware that their DHOH child may feel anxious as a result of the changes that have occurred in response to the pandemic. It is important to explain the pandemic honestly and address any questions they may have.

Suggested resources

HI HOPES

Home-based early intervention for families with DHOH babies. D/deaf mentors can assist with learning and developing sign language and/or spoken language, and advise on community-based sign language services.

<https://www.wits.ac.za/hi-hopes/>

ROOTS RESOURCES

Free eBooks, worksheets and videos.

<https://www.wits.ac.za/centre-for-deaf-studies/roots-resources/>

SOUTH AFRICAN SIGN LANGUAGE DICTIONARY

A teacher, friend and family resource for beginners. Quick and easy reference to learning South African signs with SASL, English, isiZulu and Afrikaans.

https://www.wits.ac.za/media/wits-university/faculties-and-schools/humanities/wits-school-of-education/centre-for-deaf-studies/documents/Einsteinhands%20dictionary%20inside%20pages_lowres.pdf

SIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT (SLED)

All SLED work is focused on D/deaf education, with the primary emphasis on literacy in South African Sign Language and written English.

<https://www.sled.org.za/>

Free SASL literature on YouTube.

<https://www.sled.org.za/resources-media/>

BLIND HISTORY

First-ever SASL podcast series about getting to know history's greatest men and women.

<http://cliffcentral.com/podcasts/interpreted-content/>