

Helping your deaf child to develop language, read and write

**For parents
with a
3-4 year old**



Our vision is of a
world without barriers
for every deaf child.

Introduction

This booklet provides practical ideas to help your child develop their language and early reading and writing skills.

It contains three main sections:

1. developing your child's language skills (which is good preparation for learning to read and write),
2. helping your child start learning to read,
3. helping your child start learning to write.

At the end you'll find games and activities to help make language, reading and writing fun for your child, and information about organisations and resources that can support you.

There is a lot of information in this booklet, but the key points to remember are:

- give your child lots of opportunities for conversation so they can develop their language and learn new words and phrases,
- read with your child and encourage them to read a wide range of texts,
- encourage them to write,
- make learning as fun as possible, especially with games,
- recognise what your child does well and praise them.

Lots of the activities in this booklet can be done with both hearing and deaf children, but deaf children may benefit from spending more time on them and doing them more often.

Don't forget that you can talk to other parents of deaf children about their ideas about and experiences of developing their child's language, reading and writing on NDCS's Parent Place forum: www.ndcs.org.uk/parentplace.

NDCS uses the word 'deaf' to refer to all levels of hearing loss.



The information in this publication is also suitable for families whose child has **glue ear**.

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Developing language

Why is language important?

Language helps children to learn and understand what is going on at home, playgroups, nurseries and school. It also helps them to make friends and form strong relationships.

Good language skills mean a child can chat about age-appropriate topics and use language in different ways as they get older. It will help them to be able to empathise – to imagine and understand what other people are thinking.

These skills are particularly important when children learn to read and write (imagine how hard it is to try to read or write a foreign language if you don't understand it).

You can help your child develop their language skills by making all conversation and discussion fun and stimulating. A child needs to hear a word about 200 times before they can understand it and use it correctly, so repetition is very important.

Seeing family members communicating effectively and using language in different ways will also help your child's language learning. Ensuring there is lots of meaningful interaction between adults and your child is vital.

The following sections give tips on developing language and issues to be aware of.



Developing vocabulary

Children usually develop more varied spoken vocabulary at three to four years old. Most children of this age can:

- carry out simple conversations,
- understand most simple questions,
- know the meanings of words like 'where', 'why' and 'what',
- begin to relate their own experiences and use the past tense,
- use sentences of around four to five words long,
- start and take part in 'conversation' – asking and answering questions, passing comment and talking about their actions and activities,
- develop a sense of humour and enjoy playing tricks!



Challenges

This table shows some of the challenges that deaf children may have when learning language. It gives examples of ways that you can support your child to overcome them at home.

Challenge	How to help
Knowing or choosing the right word.	<p>Use pictures and objects to help introduce and establish vocabulary.</p> <p>Use opportunities in everyday life to repeat and practise words with your child (such as bedtimes, mealtimes or shopping).</p> <p>Build up your child's vocabulary by linking new words to ones they already know.</p>
Joining words together in sentences.	<p>Provide as much experience as possible of language alongside daily activities and routines, showing how words link to what you do.</p> <p>If your child's speech is incorrect, calmly repeat the word/phrase/sentence correctly and continue the conversation.</p> <p>Use experience books (homemade books about your child and their experiences) and photo diaries to prompt links between the words they know and the experiences they have had.</p>
Understanding or making sense of what is said.	<p>Check that your communication is clear – start with simple language relating to what they are doing, pictures or objects.</p> <p>Use short sentences or chunks of language and support them with pictures or objects.</p> <p>Start with what your child has said and then expand on it.</p> <p>Repeat when necessary.</p> <p>Avoid using lots of new words with your child.</p>
Difficulty hearing the quieter and higher frequency speech sounds such as 'f', 'p', 't', 'ss' and 'sh'.	<p>Different sounds in spoken English have different frequencies (pitch). Deaf children may find it particularly difficult to hear the quieter and higher frequency speech sounds consistently. (These sounds often make up the beginnings and ends of words.)</p> <p>If you notice your child having difficulty hearing or producing these sounds, talk to their audiologist who may adjust your child's hearing aid settings or suggest other technologies to help.</p>
Using hearing technologies.	<p>Check that hearing technologies are working properly and discuss any problems with your child's audiologist, school or Teacher of the Deaf.</p> <p>Encourage your child to tell you and their teachers immediately if there are problems.</p>
Listening in a poor acoustic environment.	<p>Keep background noise to a minimum.</p> <p>Keep your house 'acoustically (hearing and listening) friendly' by using soft furnishings and surfaces such as carpets and curtains.</p>

Your child may be receiving support from a Teacher of the Deaf at home, pre-school or nursery. They can support you with helping your child to develop their language skills and overcoming any difficulties.

Developing language

Listening

Why is listening important?

‘Listening’ means to actively pay attention to what you hear. It is not the same as ‘hearing’.

Most children pick up language from listening. Hearing children overhear words used by adults and children in the home or on the television. This is called ‘incidental learning’. Your child may not be able to do this easily but you can make sure that you and your home help them to listen and hear more clearly.

A good listening environment

These tips will help you make your home as easy to communicate in as possible.

- Keep background noise to a minimum (for example, turn off the television when you’re not watching it).
- Use soft furnishings such as carpets and curtains to stop sounds echoing.
- Make sure you are close to your child and in their field of vision when you communicate. This helps to improve sound quality and your face and body will give visual clues. (The range of hearing aids is about three metres in a good listening environment.)
- Think about the light and how it affects communication. Don’t sit or stand with your back to the light, as your face will be in shadow. Don’t sit your child facing the window because they will be looking into bright light. Make sure that the people’s faces are visible and in good light to help with lipreading and reading facial expressions. If you are supporting your spoken communication with sign language or gesturing, make sure your child can see everyone in the conversation.
- Take turns at speaking so there is only one person speaking at once. You could use a visual clue, such as raising your hand or holding a certain object, to indicate when a person is speaking.



Using hearing technology

Pay attention to your child's hearing technology to make sure they have the best possible level of hearing. This will help them to experience as much spoken language and communication as possible.

If your child uses hearing aids, you need to check that:

- there is no damage to any part of the hearing aid such as the casing, elbows or tubing,
- there is no buildup of wax in the earmould,
- the tubing is free of condensation (there should be no small drops of water in the tube going into the earmould),
- they are switched on,
- the batteries are working,
- the sound quality is correct (by listening to the hearing aid with a stethoscope).

If your child uses bone anchored hearing aids or cochlear implants, you need to check that:

- there is no damage to the casing,
- wires are not worn or loose in their sockets,
- the batteries are working,
- they are switched on.

Cochlear implants may have a visual indicator to show you that all the parts are working well. The audiologist will show you the best way to check your device.

For more information

Read NDCS's booklet *Hearing Aids: Information for families*

Watch NDCS's video *How to use your hearing aid care kit* at www.ndcs.org.uk/videos

Contact your child's audiologist/Teacher of the Deaf

If your child has a cochlear implant, visit the Ear Foundation's Sounding Board at www.soundingboard.earfoundation.org.uk.

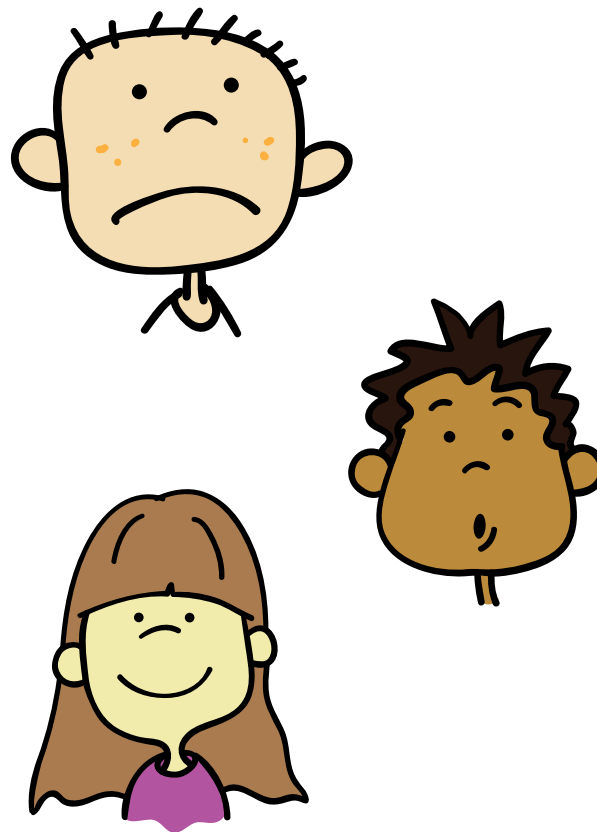


Developing language

New words

Although your child may not pick up new words through incidental learning, you can help them to develop their vocabulary by using these tips.

- Use clear and straightforward speech and language that is easy to copy.
- Expand your child's vocabulary by using different words for things – for example, instead of always using “fish” for sea creatures, use “shark”, “dolphin”, “whale” or “octopus”.
- Ask questions that give your child a choice and make sure you don't mind what they choose – for example, “Do you want an apple or a pear?”.
- Ask questions that can be answered in different ways instead of with a one-word response (these are called ‘open questions’) – for example, “Which brick do you want?” not “Do you want the red brick?”



Words for feelings

Being able to recognise, express and talk about emotions will help your child understand and empathise with others. This will support their social and emotional wellbeing.

At about three years old, children are increasingly aware of their own feelings and need the vocabulary to describe them, such as “I'm hungry” or “I'm happy”. They also begin to recognise how other people are feeling, including other children, family members and characters in books.

You can help your child learn words for feelings through pretend play activities and stories, and talking about real emotions as they happen in everyday life.

For more information

Read NDCS's booklet *What are you Feeling?*



Encouraging conversations

Conversations really help children to develop language. These tips will help you encourage your child to develop conversational skills.

- Follow your child's lead when they start a conversation. Take every opportunity to develop the conversation by asking questions and adding comments to help their understanding.
- Don't abandon the conversation. If it breaks down because you can't understand what your child is saying or they can't understand you, go back to where it went wrong and ask questions/make suggestions for your child to respond to.
- Show that you value your child's attempts to communicate with you by responding positively.

Using everyday activities

Spending time with your child and communicating during everyday activities can provide excellent opportunities for developing language and communication skills. This is useful for all communication methods, including sign language and speech.

Start by describing everyday care activities and daily routines, then develop the language by commenting on them and asking your child simple questions. You can begin to discuss and explore why things and people do what they do, what is needed to get ready for different activities and why and how things work.

Don't be afraid of trying to explain and talk about things even if you think the language is challenging. Try different ways of expressing things, use lots of repetition and rephrasing and have props to help you demonstrate your meaning and help your child express him or herself.

Simple, everyday activities that you can use to develop language include:

- getting up,
- washing and dressing,
- mealtimes,
- household jobs, such as tidying up, washing the dishes or stacking the dishwasher, cleaning, cooking, doing the laundry,
- shopping,
- gardening,
- recycling,
- bath time,
- bedtime,
- trips to the park or swimming pool.



Developing language

Play and games

Communicating with your child during play will help them develop language and help you get to know them better. It will also help your child to get to know more about him or herself and the world around them.

Playtime can be a good time to introduce new words, but remember that the main point is to have fun!

These tips can help to make playtime more enjoyable for you and your child.

- Keep games and activities short enough to hold your child's attention so that they can finish what they set out to do.
- Activities should be a challenge but should not be beyond your child's level of development – if a game is too easy they may get bored and if it is too hard they may get frustrated and give up.
- Play with your child when you are most likely to have their full attention. It will be difficult for them to enjoy it if they are tired, fed up or distracted. It may help if you set aside some time each day to play without interruptions.
- If your child lipreads, take lots of breaks as it requires a high level of concentration and can get tiring.
- If you sign with your child, play games and activities that allow your child to maintain eye contact with you to make communication easier.
- Give praise throughout the activity and try to end on a positive note.

Television and DVDs

Your child will enjoy watching many of the same cartoons and programmes as other children of their age. If they find it hard to follow what is being said in cartoons (particularly if they lipread), you can help by discussing what's happening on screen. As they get older, you can also start to introduce subtitles so they can start to try to read these.

Many young children want to watch the same thing over and over again, which can help them to understand different words.

It is important to ask your child's audiologist or Teacher of the Deaf to check that your child is making best use of their hearing technology when watching television and DVDs.

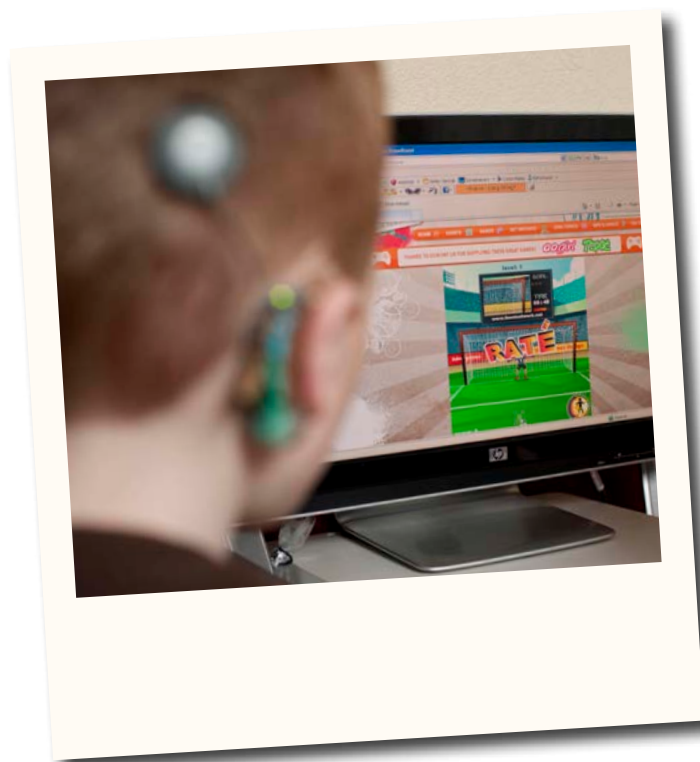


Computers

You can help your child to develop their signing skills and other areas of learning with educational computer games and CD-roms. Using the internet with your child can encourage them to find information about subjects they are interested in.

Touch-screen computers, such as tablets, have fun apps such as interactive stories, matching games and dressing up characters that can help your child develop new skills.

It is important to check that any software is suitable and does not rely on sounds that your child will not be able to hear. If your child has some hearing, they may benefit from using a direct audio input lead with their hearing aids or cochlear implant – the audiologist or Teacher of the Deaf can give advice on this.



Reading

Reading will help your child's development and learning so it is a good idea to encourage them to enjoy it.

Any reading that you do with your child will benefit them, but if you can find time to read to them every day, you will make a big difference. You can also help them to feel confident with books – knowing where the story begins, understanding the pictures and so they can enjoy looking at books alone, pretend read to their toys and read with friends.

Children of this age often like to have the same story re-read to them over and over again. This gives them confidence in re-telling the story in sequence and being able to start acting it out.

Choosing books

Books should be enjoyable and a suitable level for your child's understanding and development. If you join the local library you could ask the librarian to suggest age-appropriate books.

These tips will help you choose books.

- Your child will enjoy reading more if they feel involved – reading can help them to form their own opinions, thoughts and ideas – so give them the chance to choose their own books.
- Choose different types of books, such as picture story books, traditional stories, rhymes and information books.
- Books with deaf characters can help to give your child a positive self-image and an understanding of their deafness – ask your Teacher of the Deaf for suggestions or visit the Forest Books website: www.forestbooks.com.



Reading together

These tips will help you read together.

- Before you start a book, look for any words that your child doesn't know and think about how you will introduce them – you could use extra visual clues, such as more pictures or objects. If your child uses sign language, you may need time to learn any new signs.
- Remember that if your child lipreads they will need to see your face and the story at the same time.
- Change the tone of your voice throughout the story as appropriate and use different voices for different characters.
- Use your face to tell the story and show the feelings of the characters with your expressions.
- Use gestures and signs to back up what you and your child are reading.
- Talk about the story as you read.
- Feel free to add to the story, and explain it if your child asks you to.
- Ask your child questions such as “What do you think will happen next?” and “Why do you think so?”.
- Connect the story to your child's life with questions such as “You like going on trains too, don't you?”.
- Ask your child questions such as “Were you ever sad? When? What did you do?”.
- Use toys to act out what's happening in the story.

Making it fun

You can help your child to enjoy reading by making it a fun experience. Books that will be fun for you to read together might include:

- repeated words and phrases so that your child can join in – by speaking or signing,
- actions or responses that happen at certain points – for example, yawning, making animal noises or clapping,
- rhyming stories and nursery rhymes, which can be particularly important for deaf children as they may not pick up the rhythm of the language from everyday situations,
- simple story lines so that your child can retell the story and/or act it out – you can also act out what's happening in the book together,
- anticipation of what is going to happen next.

These tips will help you to make reading fun and interesting.

Make your own experience books – buy a blank book for writing about different topics, such as family, hobbies, holidays and places your child has visited, and stick photos and pictures in. Experience books are fun and interesting, and a great way to encourage conversation and language development.

Put labels around the home – your child will quickly learn what letters make up the words 'fridge', 'toilet' and 'bed' if they see the word every time they use the item. This is a great way to help children associate words with objects and to extend their vocabulary.

Show your child that you enjoy reading – let them see you reading for different reasons and explain what you are reading to show how important it is in everyday life. This could include signs or notices, instructions for games, recipes, magazines, cafe menus and emails.



Using phonics

At the moment there is a lot of publicity about the importance of teaching phonics. Phonics is a set of basic skills used when teaching reading and writing. At its simplest, phonics means seeing a letter on the page and making its sound when you say it, for example, knowing that the letter 'a' will have the sound /a/ as in 'apple' or 'ant'.

Teaching phonics usually starts during your child's reception year in school. However, the basis for this learning starts very early in a child's life, before they start school. It requires careful listening so deaf children need support with this. You can help your deaf child practice by encouraging them to:

- listen, make and talk about everyday sounds around them, such as the sound of a police car,
- listen, imitate and practise different ways of speaking, such as loud, soft, angry, high and low,
- enjoy the rhyme and rhythm of their language – this can be done by hearing and taking part in action songs, nursery rhymes, clapping rhythms and listening to stories where they can join in with sound effects – for example, "I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house down!".

For more information

Read the NDCS factsheet *Using Phonics to Develop your Child's Reading and Writing Skills*.



Writing

At three to four years old, your child will be starting to learn to write – this is an exciting and important stage of their development.

The following ideas and tips will help you to get your child ready for writing – remember to encourage them by praising them and putting their writing up on the wall.

Drawing and art

Some drawing and art activities help children to learn how to control pencils and crayons, as well as develop their hand–eye coordination, such as:

- painting with finger paints,
- dot-to-dot pictures,
- tracing pictures,
- copying patterns and pictures,
- drawing in sand and on blackboards.



Pretend writing

Early writing starts with ‘pretend’ writing, which children usually really enjoy. It lets them ‘write’ in their own way and make marks on paper. These ideas can give their pretend writing a purpose:

- a shopping list for either pretend shopping at home or to take to the shops – you could draw a picture next to the items they have ‘written’,
- a birthday card for a relative or friend, then putting it in an envelope, writing the address, attaching a stamp and posting it together,
- invitations for a pretend teddy bears’ picnic to give to your child’s teddies,
- a menu for a pretend cafe or restaurant,
- labels for items in a pretend shop,
- playing with chalk in the garden and ‘writing’ and drawing pictures on paving stones (chalk washes off easily),
- setting up a writing table or corner with lots of paper and cards, envelopes, stickers, stampers, pencils and pens.

Introducing the alphabet

An alphabet poster or frieze on the wall is a great way to help your child become familiar with the letters.

Most children learn to write their name first. You can help them start learning to write their name (or the first letter of it) by writing it in big letters on a piece of paper and letting them trace over it.

Activities and games

Activities and games

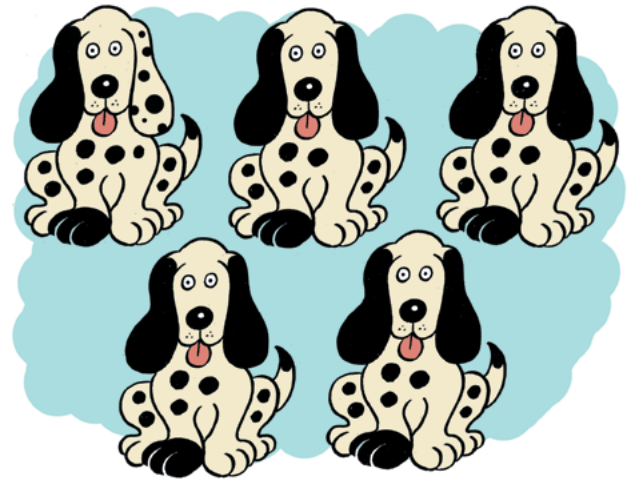
These are ideas for activities and games that can help your child develop their language, reading and writing. You don't need to do them all but you could pick a few that you think your child would enjoy. Remember to keep it fun for you both!

Memory and recognition

Missing objects tray

This game helps children to develop their knowledge of different objects and improve their memory. Before you start, make sure your child knows the names of all the objects.

1. Get several different household objects and put them on a tray. Ask your child to look at the objects.
2. Cover the tray with a cloth and remove one of the objects. Ask your child which one is missing.
3. Take turns at removing an object and guessing what's missing. You can make it harder by adding more objects.



Matching pairs

This game can help children to improve their memory and practise the names of objects.

1. Make six pairs of identical cards with pictures of a topic, such as animals, food or colours.
2. Place them all face down and take it in turns to turn over two cards.
3. If the two cards match then that person picks up the pair. If they don't then they turn them back over.
4. The winner is the person with the most pairs at the end.

Dominoes

Playing dominoes helps children to recognise different objects and find matching pictures.

1. Make or buy a set of dominoes with pictures of a subject your child is interested in, such as cars, trains or animals.
2. Split the dominoes into two piles and take a pile each.
3. Take it in turns to put a domino down, making sure that the picture matches the domino it is next to.
4. The winner is the first person to use up all their dominoes.

You can also talk about the pictures and make up simple stories about them.

This game can be used to introduce or practise words or signs with your child.

- ## Picture lotto

Playing games with pictures helps children to recognise and learn words for specific objects. Before you start, make sure your child knows the names of all the objects in the pictures.

- ## Make believe and imagination

Using cardboard boxes to play with develops children's language and extends their imagination. The box can be anything they like – for example, a boat, cooker, petrol station, train, shop counter or space rocket. You could find a few props from around the home to help them get their imagination going.

Role play helps children to learn new words to use in different situations and see how people might react to what they say. Think of different situations you can role play together and take it in turns to be the different characters, such as doctor and patient. Here are some ideas for places you could pretend to be:

- ## Dressing up box

Dressing up and play-acting can help children learn about different roles and the world around them. Collect different clothes in a box and ask relatives and friends for clothes they don't want. You can also look out for unusual clothes in car boot sales and charity shops. Encourage your child to use their imagination when they get dressed up.



Activities and games

Games and experiments

Corn flour gloop

This is a messy but fun activity that gives your child the chance to explore and describe different textures.

1. Mix corn flour and water together in a tray – you can add food colouring to change the colour.
2. Let your child feel the texture as they put their hands in the mixture and squeeze it or push it around. They can also try writing letters of their name in the mixture.

Play-Doh

Playing with Play-Doh or Plasticine can be lots of fun and help children learn words for different colours, shapes and textures. You can encourage them to make specific objects and learn the words together, or just let their imagination run wild!

Buying games

There are lots of games available to buy or borrow from a toy library that can help your child to learn about language, reading, writing, taking turns, and sharing. See if your local children's centre has a toy library or talk to other parents about swapping games.

Music

Singing and signing songs

Most children love singing and signing songs. This also helps them to learn new words and how to use them. When your child feels confident you could perform the songs for friends and family, encouraging everyone to join in.

Facts and learning

Draw around your child

A life-size cut out of your child helps them to learn about the different body parts.

1. Get them to lie on a large piece of paper and draw a line around them.
2. Cut the shape of their body out and label the body parts.
3. Take it in turns to point at the different parts and say what they are – you could sometimes say the wrong name so they can correct you.

Guess the animal or character

Getting a child to guess an animal or character helps them to make connections between facts and practise new vocabulary.

1. Think of an animal or character and then give the child clues about what it is, for example, "It lives in a pond, is yellow, has a beak and says 'Quack!'"
2. Carry on until they guess correctly.



Around the home

Visual weekly diary

A diary helps children to understand what they will be doing in the day, learn the days of the week and about time. It can also help your child to develop language about things they do every day. Make a weekly chart and then add pictures of different activities you will be doing, such as swimming, nursery, visit Granny or go to the park. You can stick the pictures on the chart together at the start of the week and ask your child to describe what each activity is and help to pack the things they need, such as a towel and swimming costume. NDCS has a free weekly planner that you can order (see page 20).

Cooking

Lots of children love baking and it's a great time to learn new words and concepts. They can also help you with simple tasks, such as peeling fruit or buttering bread – this gives you a great chance to chat. If you are baking together, start with something simple from a recipe book, such as fairy cakes. Read the recipe together and let your child take part as much as possible, even if it's messy – cracking eggs and putting cake mixture in cases. You could make your own recipe book together with all the things you've made.

Gardening

Gardening is a fun activity to do together that teaches children new vocabulary and concepts. You don't need to have a big garden as you can grow some flowers and vegetables in a small pot. Your library will have books about gardening and nature.

Out and about

Nature walk

Going for a walk and learning about nature is a fun way to learn new words. Your child can collect different leaves, acorns or conkers and make a scrapbook of what they find. You can also stick in photos of trees and plants that you see and label them.

Resources and organisations

The National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS)

NDCS has a range of publications and resources that can help your child develop language and early literacy skills. Sign up for free membership to order all our resources for free:

- online at **www.ndcs.org.uk**.
- by phoning NDCS's Freephone Helpline on 0808 800 8880 (voice and text)
- by emailing helpline@ndcs.org.uk.

NDCS's Family Sign Language website is for families of deaf children who want to use British Sign Language. It teaches the signs and phrases needed for nursery rhymes, stories and playing make-believe games as well as the tools for practical communication about important topics, such as food, sleeping and nappy changing. Find out more at **www.familysignlanguage.org.uk**

These organisations give information about resources suitable for deaf children. Don't forget that you can make your own free and fun games and activities at home that can be equally enjoyable.

Auditory Verbal UK

A national charity providing auditory verbal services including intensive, family-based support to enable babies and young children who are deaf to listen and talk.

Telephone: 01869 321429
info@avuk.org
www.avuk.org

Bookshine/Bookstart

The Bookshine booklist introduces ideas for books for children up to the age of five, based on suggestions from parents, teachers, children and experts. Deaf children can get Bookshine packs as well as two standard Bookstart packs.

www.bookstart.org.uk

Cued Speech

A national charity that provides information, advice, courses and learning materials about cued speech.

Telephone: 01803 832784
info@cuedspeech.co.uk
www.cuedspeech.co.uk

DELTA: Deaf Education through Listening and Talking

A national charity supporting deaf children and their families who wish to follow an auditory route. It provides information, publications and an annual summer school for families.

Telephone: 0845 1081 437
enquires@deafeducation.org.uk
www.deafeducation.org.uk

The Ear Foundation

A national charity that supports people with cochlear implants or bone anchored hearing aids. It runs parent, family and professional courses, and produces publications about communication and language that parents of all deaf children will find helpful. Parents can visit the Sounding Board (www.soundingboard.earfoundation.org.uk) to ask questions about cochlear implants.

Telephone: 0115 942 1985
info@earfoundation.org.uk
www.earfoundation.org.uk

The Elizabeth Foundation

A national charity that supports deaf babies, young children, pre-school children and their families and provides a home learning course for pre-school children.

Telephone: 0203 9237 2735
info@elizabeth-foundation.org
www.elizabeth-foundation.org

Ewing Foundation

A national charity promoting inclusion and achievement of deaf children through listening and speaking.

Telephone: 07879 425397

www.ewing-foundation.org.uk

Forest Books

Forest Books sells books and other resources about deafness and deaf issues. It has books, videos and CD-ROMs suitable for deaf children, and resources for people learning sign language.

Telephone: 01594 833 858 (voice and text)

Fax: 01594 833 446

forest@forestbooks.com

www.forestbooks.com

Letterbox Library

Letterbox Library sells story and reference books for children who are dealing with difficult and confusing issues. Books cover subjects such as divorce, a death in the family, bullying or being made to feel 'different', and help children understand what is happening and find positive ways of coping.

Telephone: 020 7503 4801 (voice)

Fax: 020 7503 4800

info@letterboxlibrary.com

www.letterboxlibrary.com

The National Literacy Trust

The National Literacy Trust is an independent charity that believes everyone in the UK should have the literacy skills they need.

support@literacytrust.org.uk

www.literacytrust.org.uk

Orchard Toys

Orchard Toys sells games and toys online and in most toyshops.

www.orchardtoys.com

Signed Stories

Signed Stories is an ITV website designed primarily for deaf children, although hearing children will enjoy it too. It is a fun, busy website with subtitles and sign language, which encourages children to explore and offers easy access to a wide range of British books.

www.signedstories.com

Smart Play Network (Scotland)

Smart Play Network is the support organisation for toy libraries and play resource projects in Scotland.

Telephone: 0131 664 2746

www.smartplaynetwork.org

Stories in the Air CD-ROM

This CD-ROM teaches 120 basic British Sign Language signs and is divided by topic.

contact@learnbsl.org

www.learnbsl.org

NDCS provides the following services through our membership scheme. Registration is simple, fast and free to parents and carers of deaf children and professionals working with them. Contact the Freephone Helpline (see below) or register through www.ndcs.org.uk

- A Freephone Helpline 0808 800 8880 (voice and text) offering clear, balanced information on many issues relating to childhood deafness, including schooling and communication options.
- A range of publications for parents and professionals on areas such as audiology, parenting and financial support.
- A website at www.ndcs.org.uk with regularly updated information on all aspects of childhood deafness and access to all NDCS publications.
- A team of family officers who provide information and local support for families of deaf children across the UK.
- Specialist information, advice and support (including representation at hearings if needed) from one of our appeals advisers in relation to the following types of tribunal appeals: education (including disability discrimination, special educational needs (SEN) and, in Scotland, Additional Support for Learning (ASL)); and benefits.
- An audiologist and technology team to provide information about deafness and equipment that may help deaf children.
- Technology Test Drive – an equipment loan service that enables deaf children to try out equipment at home or school
- Family weekends and special events for families of deaf children.
- Sports, arts and outdoor activities for deaf children and young people.
- A quarterly magazine and regular email updates.
- An online forum for parents and carers to share their experiences, at www.ndcs.org.uk/parentplace.
- A website for deaf children and young people to get information, share their experiences and have fun www.buzz.org.uk.

NDCS is the leading charity dedicated to creating a world without barriers for deaf children and young people.

NDCS Freephone Helpline:
0808 800 8880 (voice and text)

Email: helpline@ndcs.org.uk

www.ndcs.org.uk

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