

# My child has hearing loss



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When you first discover that your child has a hearing loss, parents often go through a range of emotions. It is completely normal to feel sadness, uncertainty and grief, and it is also normal to feel relief that perhaps your suspicions have been confirmed. The most important thing is to recognise your feelings and look after yourself while your family adjusts.

You may find it helpful to discuss concerns with your audiologist or a counsellor.



“It’s  
SO important  
that parents know  
that their child will  
be absolutely fine!

Hearing loss can be scary  
in the beginning but it’s  
not something that will ruin  
their child’s life. Yes, there  
will be certain barriers their  
kids will face that hearing  
kids won’t, but they can  
support and empower  
their child to navigate and  
overcome obstacles as  
they come up.”

– Eleanor, 25



## Emotional support for your child

Just like you, your child will likely be feeling a lot of different emotions, especially if this diagnosis has come as a shock. An older child or teenager may take a long time to accept their Deafness, whereas a younger child is more likely to take it in their stride.

It’s important that you give them time to understand how their hearing loss will affect their life, and regularly talk about how they’re feeling. Seeing a counsellor or your GP may help with this.

“I think the best thing my mum did was she supported me but she also let me make my own choices. By 13, I was too independent mentally to have such personal choices made for me. It took me a while to come to terms with my hearing loss but when I got there, I was glad I never had to have any resentment towards my mum.”

– Lily, 25, Hearing Aid Wearer

## Communication strategies

There are some easy strategies that you can implement right away. These include facing your child when speaking, limiting background noise like the TV or music, turning on captions when watching a movie, and informing your child's school and teachers of their hearing loss.

It can also be very helpful to start learning some basic sign language.

Many young people wished that they learned some sign language when they were diagnosed with hearing loss.

We have a range of free sign language resources available on our website at: [www.nfd.org.nz/resources-for-families](http://www.nfd.org.nz/resources-for-families)

Alternatively, you can contact us for information to help schools and teachers to support your child.



A young man with dark hair, wearing a plaid shirt, is smiling broadly. Behind him, a young woman with long brown hair is also smiling. They are outdoors, with trees and foliage in the background. The image is partially obscured by a white speech bubble on the left and a green background on the right.

Even if you use spoken language as the main form of communication for your family, learning sign language or being open to using sign language can help a lot.”

– Gaby, 24, Cochlear Implant Wearer

## Listening devices

Depending on the severity and cause of your child’s hearing loss, a number of assistive listening devices may be recommended to you by your doctor and audiologist. These might include hearing aids or cochlear implants. Sometimes speech therapy is also recommended.

## Financial support

In New Zealand, if your child is diagnosed with a hearing loss, the Ministry of Health may be able to help. Hearing aids for children in full-time education, up to 21 years of age, are funded by the Ministry of Health. This includes batteries, maintenance, and repairs.

You can find out more on the Ministry of Health website: [www.health.govt.nz](http://www.health.govt.nz)

## Support at school

Even a mild hearing loss can significantly impact a student's ability to follow a lesson and actively participate in class, so it is important that you let your child's teacher know about their hearing loss.

Your child may find that it takes intense concentration to comprehend information and understand instructions. Many hard of hearing students report being exhausted at the end of the school day.

There are a number of small changes that teachers can put in place to help, including managing background noise, making lessons more visual, setting up a buddy system, and providing more time for tasks.

For useful resources to share with your child's teacher, head to: [www.nfd.org.nz/resources-for-families](http://www.nfd.org.nz/resources-for-families)



## You are not alone

There is a big Deaf and hard of hearing community in New Zealand as well as a community of parents and loved ones of children with hearing loss. Being supported and having people around you who are on the same journey is crucial when it comes to advice, connection, and celebrating the little wins. If you want to connect with other families going through this journey, we recommend joining a support group or online chat community for parents of children with hearing loss.

A great start is to connect in with our online community on Facebook at: [www.facebook.com/NFDHOH](https://www.facebook.com/NFDHOH).

Then, find a range of support group options meeting in various locations around New Zealand at <https://www.hearinghouse.co.nz/support-groups>. Hear4families and Deaf Children are also great organisations to check out for more support.

**“I would say that experiencing Deaf culture from a young age and a knowledge of NZSL would have definitely sped up my journey of self-acceptance.”**

**– Hope, 17, Hearing Aid Wearer**



## For more information

If you would like more information, you are welcome to get in touch with our friendly team for a confidential discussion. We also have a community Facebook Group where we share daily updates on the latest news for the Deaf and hard of hearing, and community discussions are facilitated and encouraged.

Alternatively, visit our website at [www.nfd.org.nz](http://www.nfd.org.nz) to find out more about the work that we do.

The National Foundation for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing receives no government funding. All the work we do and support we provide to the Deaf and hard of hearing community in New Zealand is made possible thanks to the generous support of private donors and funders. If you'd like to support the work we do, like the Hearing Screening Programme in schools, there are a number of ways you can donate. Any donation over \$5 is tax deductible.

You can make a donation via our website or by internet banking, please use the following bank account:  
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