

What is deafness?

HOW DOES IT EFFECT CHILDREN

NHS (2019) describe deafness as the partial or full or temporary loss of hearing. Some of the signs that can indicate deafness in children and babies include;

- increased tiredness
- increased frustration
- not responding to their name
- misundersating direction of sound
- difficulty concentrating
- volume of speech too low or too high

There are different causes for deafness which could vary between the cochlea inside the ear not working, damage to inner hairs and cells which allow for hearing, glue ear - a common childhood illness, and a combination of different types of deafness.

Glue ear is a condition which can be bought on through infection and can cause the child to be stereotyped instead of treated with support.

Dorset Council (2025a) recognise the skills that deaf children may most need support with:

- listening skills
- language
- communication

It is important to monitor the type and level of hearing loss the child has, understand how the hearing is checked and give parents deep insight into how hearing tests are run and what they check for as well as bountiful information about how to use hearing equipment properly.

Teacher of the deaf

EXPERT TRAINING

According to Dorset Council (2025b) teachers of the deaf are qualified teachers who may have worked in mainstream schools previously and choose to complete further training to become a Qualified Teacher of the Deaf. They work with children at home, school, early years settings and colleges from all age ranges. They work in partnership with medical services and professionals to support the child in reaching their full educational potential, assuring they have all the tools they need to understand and make the most out of the curriculum.

In the womb and beyond

HOW HEARING IS DEVELOPED FROM PRE-BIRTH

Babies start hearing sounds in the womb and continuing to learn outside of the womb developing their emerging speech skills at around 6 months of age. Supporting children with hearing additional needs gives them fair opportunities to develop speech and language skills.

(NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON DEAFNESS AND OTHER COMMUNICATION DISORDERS, 2021)



(Bilich, 2024)

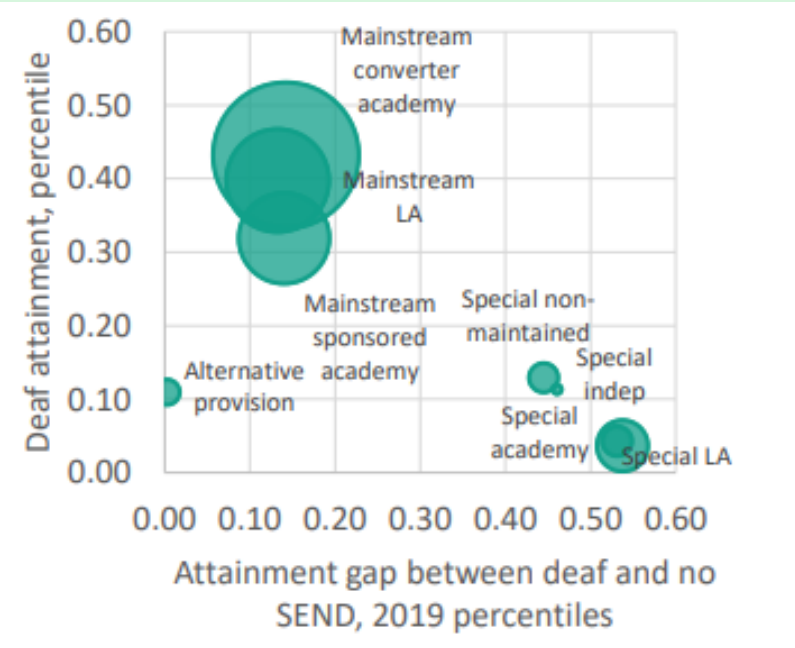


(National Deaf Children's Society, n.d.)

Deafness in the Early Years

90%

of all deaf children are born to hearing parents (NHS 2019)



(Hutchinson, 2023)

BETWEEN 2006-2016 OVER

13,000

DEAF BABIES IDENTIFIED

Newborn screening

HOW EARLY IDENTIFICATION & DIAGNOSIS BROKE DOWN BARRIERS

According to the NDCS (nd) there is a clear link between early identification and child development. Especially with language and socio-emotional development. Early identification allows for early intervention which reduces future cost on more extensive methods of support.



(The Elizabeth foundation, 2018b)

“Most wonderful, supporting, loving place”

(THE ELIZABETH FOUNDATION, 2018B)

Parent’s reviews of the Elizabeth Foundations Ofsted rated Outstanding Early Years services are crucial to understanding the impact of their work. Utilising speech and language therapists, teachers of the deaf and building on the EYFS including support method for deaf children. Monitoring hearing aids, resolving parents queries and demonstrating daily audiological management.

(THE ELIZABETH FOUNDATION, 2018B)

Support available

HOW ARE DEAF CHILDREN SUPPORTED FROM BIRTH

The Elizabeth foundation (2018) are just one of the organisations that can support children from birth. They offer educational support as well as information on how your local authority should be supporting you. With Audiological care and a teacher of the deaf. They offer nursery intervention services and family residential summer courses. According to National Deaf Children's Society (2020) radio aids and soundfield systems support children in schools to focus more, cutting out surrounding sounds, reducing the child’s tiredness and increasing mental wellbeing as well as educational achievement. Using tools such as these in schools has removed the stigma around additional learning needs withing peer groups.

A remarkable recent gene therapy performed on a 1 year old allowed her to go from deafness to hearing. Specialists in the field are hoping this is the start of a treatment for hearing issues in young children which further removes the barrier of long term costing, reducing the need for constantly renewed technology such as cochlear implants. (BBC News, 2024) However NDCS (nd) identify that governments don’t seem to be providing children with the necessary support with 72% of deaf pre-school children failing to reach a good level of development in 2016.

In 2023 experts in the field of children with hearing needs discussed the need for better support services for children on STV News (2023). In Scotland there are teachers of the deaf however they have struggled to keep numbers of teachers which in turn effects the quality of support children recieve. This is disadvantaging children with hearing disabilities. Lack of pay, lack of funding, lack of education causes governments to overlook the need for support and to assume tools such as cochlear implants act as ‘cures’ whereas the professionals discussing in this source explain that deaf children still need extra support. In comparison English teachers of the deaf are given around £4000 more in their slaries than standard teachers.

From this poster and presentation it is clear that children who are deaf have a variety of needs including a focus needed on their language, communication and emotional wellbeing. The right support being in place is important to give children the same inclusive opportunities as children without deafness have. The techniques used over the last ten years have proven to support children and break down barriers in their additional learning needs. Finally there are exciting scientific developments in the sector which have given a new hope for deaf families and professionals working in the field. If this continues we could be saving the NHS crucial funding and therefore increase the quality of care available.