

Deaf Friendly Families

Have you ever wondered what deaf adults appreciated most in their family as they were growing up? Have you wondered how you could assist your deaf child at home to feel included within your full family?

The following information has been provided by deaf adults and is a guide for families to assist them to include their deaf child at home.

Communication

Deaf adults felt included and valued as children when people:

- made sure their full attention was gained before speaking or signing
- kept cups, beads, hands away from the mouth while speaking to ensure optimum lip reading ability
- taught their brothers and sisters to communicate with them
- ensured background noise was kept low
- ensured the deaf child was fully involved in and informed of the conversations happening around them
- understood that sometimes deaf children will not understand what has been said and happily repeated themselves if asked
- explained jokes that were not understood.

Expectations

Deaf adults felt empowered as children when:

- they were treated the same as their siblings, in every-day activities
- they had an awareness of the expectations their families had for them
- their families believed in their abilities and encouraged them to be independent and aim for success.

For further information about Deaf Children Australia visit our website,
www.deafchildrenaustralia.org.au

Helpline 1800 645 916 Email helpline@deafchildren.org.au

Deaf Children Australia uses the term 'deaf' to refer to all degrees and types of hearing loss.

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The television

Deaf adults felt empowered as children when the importance of equal access to information and resources was understood by:

- having accurate subtitles on TV programs
- efforts made to ensure the quality of subtitles was maintained, including adjusting the aerial to improve reception quality
- family members only watching TV programs with subtitles
- family members who told them what was happening on the television if the program didn't have subtitles
- parents who showed, at a level they could understand, how to lobby for improved subtitling.

The door bell

Deaf adults felt liberated as children when:

- a flashing door bell was installed in the house so they knew there was someone at the door
- a flashing light was installed to notify them that the phone was ringing.
- if there was no flashing light, family members informed them that someone was knocking on the front door or the phone was ringing.

The phone

Deaf adults felt empowered as children when:

- their family had a TTY installed at home families would use the National Relay Service (NRS) to talk to them instead of asking another family member to interpret.
- family members were happy to tell them who was on the phone

The Internet

Deaf adults felt empowered as children when:

- the family has a reliable internet connection
- families used internet based systems for communication
- families had regular discussions around new technologies

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The dinner table

Deaf adults felt empowered when:

- they had equal access to conversations at the dinner table.
- family members speaking one at a time and even raising their hand to indicate their wish to speak. This meant the deaf child knew who was speaking and where to look to make sure the rest of the conversation wasn't missed.
- family members signing as best as they could while at the dinner table
- they were placed at the table where they could see everyone easily and clearly.

Family arguments

Deaf adults felt involved and considered as children when:

- the effect of witnessing arguments on deaf children was not overlooked. In this situation, families would empower their deaf children by explaining what the argument was about, what it meant and the outcomes of the argument.

The extended family

Deaf adults felt empowered as children when

- they were informed about when people would be visiting
- extended family had an awareness of deafness and their communication needs and tried to involve them as best as they could
- they were involved in family get-togethers by being included in conversations
- they were informed of family members' names

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