



NAATD Policy Statements

The “National Committee” of the National Association of Australian Teachers of the Deaf (NAATD) comprises two representatives from each State NAATD Branch and provides leadership, direction and understanding between members of the teaching and other professions throughout Australia in relation to the education of children and students who are deaf.

An important part of the of the NAATD Constitution states that the National Committee is “To act as an informed and responsible voice on the education of children and students who are deaf”. (Reference - the Constitution of the National Association of Australian Teachers of the Deaf: Objects of the Association 3.4)

In this document the term “deaf” covers the full range of hearing loss to be found in the population.

1:1 Teachers of the Deaf

Belief

Teachers of the Deaf will be registered in accordance with Teacher of the Deaf qualifications.

Teachers of the Deaf will demonstrate commitment to membership of the National Association of Australian Teachers of the Deaf.

Teachers of the Deaf are specially trained teachers who have diverse skills to meet the communication, language and educational needs of deaf children and students in the context of general development.

Education providers should seek to employ Teachers of the Deaf in programs and services.

Rights

All deaf children and students have the right to access education and support from Teachers of the Deaf who have the specialist training required to meet the NAATD Competencies.

Educational providers must employ qualified Teachers of the Deaf and ensure their ongoing professional development.

Practices

State Government and other employing authorities have a responsibility to promote access to initial specialist training as Teachers of the Deaf, maintenance of teacher supply and continuing development for practitioners in the field.

NAATD supports and is willing to work with Universities in their endeavours to provide appropriate and accredited courses for initial training and ongoing professional development.

1:2 Universal Newborn Hearing Screening

Belief

Earlier diagnosis of hearing loss enables earlier intervention.

Rights

Following diagnosis of hearing loss it is essential that parents are provided with a range of service options and support agencies.

Families should be provided with comprehensive and non biased advice on the range of services and support

agencies.

It is essential that a Teacher of the Deaf is involved as a member of the support network when a child is first diagnosed with a hearing loss.

Practices

The Universal Newborn Hearing Screening programs throughout Australia are strongly supported by NAATD.

The provision of caseload management is strongly supported to follow up the Universal Newborn Hearing Screening.

1:3 Early Intervention

Beliefs

Deaf children benefit from early intervention for communication, language, social and emotional development.

Rights

It is essential for deaf children that intervention commences as soon as possible after diagnosis.

Early intervention programs will be family centred and involve a Teacher of the Deaf.

Quality early intervention programs will be available to all deaf children and their families irrespective of their geographic location, additional needs and socio economic status.

Practices

The Teacher of the Deaf will share expertise and knowledge with families of deaf children and other professionals to maximise developmental outcomes.

1:4 Audiological Management

Beliefs

Optimal audiological management is essential at all stages of deaf children and students development.

Rights/implementation

It is the right of individuals, families and caregivers to make fully informed choices about audiological management.

It is the right of the individuals, families and caregivers to access appropriate amplification devices and timely services in consultation with audiologists and other professionals.

Practices

Teachers of the Deaf will work collaboratively with Australian Hearing and other accredited audiological providers.

NAATD supports the free provision and service of amplification equipment/ devices for children and students.

1:5 Classroom Acoustics

Beliefs

Learning opportunities for all children will be maximised when optimum acoustic conditions are provided.

Rights

Deaf children and students require optimum classroom acoustic conditions at all times in addition to their individual amplification systems.

Practices

Australian Standard AS/NZS 2107-2000 should be adhered to that has recommended maximum ambient noise levels for teaching areas (unoccupied classrooms) to be 40 dBA with a specified maximum value of 45 dBA. Reverberation times should be 0.4 to 0.5 seconds for primary schools and 0.5 to 0.6 seconds for secondary schools.

All classrooms should meet the Australian Standards AS/NZS 2107:2000.

NAATD supports the use of sound field amplification in all classrooms.

1:6 Auslan as a Language of Instruction

Beliefs

English and Auslan will be used as the languages of instruction in a bilingual/bicultural program.

Rights

All deaf children and students have the right to a bilingual/bicultural program with teachers who are highly skilled in both languages.

Practices

All students in schools providing a bilingual program to Deaf students should teach Auslan as their LOTE to facilitate communication between cultural groups.

Parents and families are entitled to opportunities to learn Auslan.

1:7 Interpreters

Beliefs

Some deaf children and students will use Auslan to access the school curriculum.

Rights

Where schools employ Auslan interpreters they require NAATI accreditation.

Practices

Where deaf children and students use Auslan for their schooling they will have full access to all aspects of the school curriculum through the use of NAATI accredited interpreters.

1:8 Deaf Children and Students with Additional Needs

Beliefs

Deaf children and students may present with additional needs that require specialised services.

Rights

Deaf children and students with additional needs have the right to receive equitable access to specialist support services.

Practices

Deaf children and students are not to be discriminated against when requiring additional services irrespective of cost, enrolment or degree of hearing loss.

Specialist support services must be accessible to all deaf children and students as required.

1:9 Multi Media Technology

Beliefs

Deaf children and students benefit from a range of multi-media materials.

Rights

Deaf children and students will have suitable access to all multi-media materials in educational settings.

Practices

Education facilities must have appropriate multi media technology including captioning to enable access to curriculum materials.

1:10 Students in Regional and Remote Areas

Beliefs

Deaf children and students reside with their families in a range of geographic locations and benefit from access to services in their own community.

Rights

Deaf children and students will access programs and resources that best meet their educational needs regardless of geographic location

It is the right of deaf children and students to access education and support from Teachers of the Deaf regardless of their location.

Deaf children and students have the right to access an educational setting that respects their linguistic and cultural preferences.

Practices

Educational authorities have a responsibility to overcome the barriers to relevant programs and curriculum presented by the unique circumstances of rural and remote areas.

Location should not deny deaf children, students and their families a choice of educational settings and communication approaches.

1: 11 Rights of Deaf Children and Students

(i) Equal Opportunities

Belief

Equality of opportunity is a prerequisite of education.

Right

Deaf children and students have the right to equality of opportunity regardless of degree or type of deafness.

Practices

Deaf children and students will be afforded equal access to all programs regardless of degree or type of deafness.

Deaf children and students will be provided with the most appropriate audiological management.

(ii) The Abilities of Deaf Children and Students

Beliefs

Deaf children and students have the same potential for language development and learning as their hearing

peers.

Deaf children and students have individual needs and requirements.

Rights

Deaf children and students have a right to a full and relevant education in an appropriate educational environment, such that they leave education with optimal language and communication skills.

Deaf children and students have the right to have their individual needs respected.

Deaf children and students have the right to develop literacy skills to fully engage with the national curriculum.

Deaf children and students have the right to access experiences required to develop skills and knowledge necessary for their future.

Practices

Deaf children and students are entitled to access the curriculum through the provision of reasonable adjustments that include appropriate pedagogy and assessment practices, specialist equipment and technology, support from Teachers of the Deaf, interpreters and note-takers.

(iii) Identity

Belief

Some deaf children and students will be part of the deaf community, some will be part of the hearing community and some will move between the two.

Rights

Deaf children and students will develop appropriate skills to enable them to participate in hearing and deaf communities according to their choice.

Practices

Deaf children and students will be provided with opportunities to engage with both hearing and deaf role models within their communities.

(iv) Family

Belief

Deaf children and students come from hearing or deaf families, from differing household structures and from differing ethnic and linguistic backgrounds which need to be considered in the provision of programs and services.

Rights

Parental wishes and informed choices will be recognised and respected.

Practices

Education programs will promote positive relationships and communication within the family.

The above section on the Rights of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children (1:10) was adapted from the BATOD policy "Towards a National Policy in the Education of Deaf Children and Young People" - with the kind permission of the Secretary Paul Simpson (2002) of the British Association of Teachers of the Deaf. This document was recognised by major voluntary organisations working with and for deaf people. It was accepted as part of BATOD policy at the Annual General Meeting November 1995. In this document the term 'deaf' covers the full range of hearing loss to be found in the population.

These policy statements were accepted by the NAATD National Committee on 13/01/2003 and amended 15/8/2010.