

# POLICY



## Education

<b>Purpose</b>	<p>Every deaf child regardless of their level of hearing loss, should have the right to receive education bilingually (English and Australian Sign Language – Auslan). By knowing and using Auslan and written and/or spoken English language, the deaf child will have the best chance to achieve their full cognitive, linguistic and social capabilities and will be enabled to fully participate in mainstream Australian society as a bilingual and bicultural person.</p> <p>This Policy supports the notion of bilingual education for every deaf child in Australia. Education providers of all forms need to ensure that education is accessible and appropriate for deaf children with support from the Deaf community.</p>
<b>Background &amp; Overview</b>	<p>Deaf Australia’s Vision: Deaf people are respected and fully included in the Australian community and the right to use Auslan is legally recognised.</p> <p>Deaf Australia’s Mission: Deaf Australia is the only Australian peak body managed by deaf people representing deaf people and their communities. We work with Australian Governments and collaborate with key stakeholders to ensure that Australia complies with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.</p> <p>Deaf Australia is an ordinary member of the World Federation of the Deaf, which has consultative status in the United Nations. This policy is adapted from the World Federation of the Deaf ‘Education Rights for Deaf Children’ policy, and is informed by Australia’s Disability Discrimination Act (Cth, 1992) and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), of which Australia is a signatory.</p> <p>Deaf people in Australia, as in most developed countries, form a linguistic and cultural minority group and their language – Auslan – has been recognised as one of Australia’s many community languages (Dawkins, 1991). With appropriate education and access to support services, deaf people are able to lead independent and productive lives and contribute to Australian society economically, socially and culturally.</p> <p>However, all too often deaf people are disadvantaged by ineffective access to communication, education and services in Australia. The literacy levels of deaf learners often lag well behind those of their hearing peers. Their enrolment rates in higher education and training are generally below the average for the Australian community, and</p>

	<p>deaf people are regularly under-employed. These disadvantages represent an avoidable cost to the national economy. Full, equitable access to education is the key to empowerment of all learners. Ongoing education provides the opportunity for deaf people to acquire the necessary skills to become independent, self sustaining, valuable employees and contributing members of Australian society.</p> <p>This Policy supports the principle of bilingual education for deaf people in Australia. It calls for flexibility in the range of educational settings and support services provided, as inclusive settings will not meet the needs of all deaf children. It calls for families, professionals and deaf people to work in partnership to deliver excellence in education for deaf students.</p>
<b>Scope</b>	<p>All stake holders including but not restricted to Departments of Education at federal and state levels, schools, higher education institutions, colleges, the TAFE sector and private providers.</p>
<b>The Policy</b>	<p>To ensure that access to equitable education and the rights of deaf children and students are in place, Deaf Australia:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reaffirms its position that all deaf people, including deaf children, have the right to access equitable education based on best bilingual practices, which includes instruction in Australian Sign Language (Auslan) and English;</li> <li>2. Calls for both Auslan and English to be given equal status and respect. Both languages should be provided in a natural and accessible learning environment within a developmentally appropriate framework;</li> <li>3. Supports universal newborn hearing screening programs but asserts these identification programs must be followed promptly by Auslan/English bilingual early intervention strategies and programs, in partnership with families, deaf adults, and professionals;</li> <li>4. Calls upon governments (Commonwealth and States/Territories) to ensure full and equal access to optimal educational programs for deaf learners based on regular education goals, standards and curricula, in both mainstream (inclusive) settings and specialist classes and schools;</li> <li>5. Reaffirms that such curricula should provide opportunities for deaf and hearing students to learn both Auslan and English as academic subjects. Supports the inclusion of Auslan as a Language Other than English (LOTE) subject in schools;</li> <li>6. Calls for the establishment of a National Deaf Education Standards Group with a membership base that is representative of the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), deaf adults and bilingual education experts and is cooperative with Commonwealth and States/ Territory Education Advisory Groups;</li> <li>7. Calls on education providers to ensure that there is adequate provision of appropriately qualified and competent specialist staff</li> </ol>

	<p>working with deaf children (e.g. consultant teachers, teachers of the deaf, interpreters, note takers, audiologists, speech therapists and ongoing training of these professionals);</p> <p>8. Calls on education providers to ensure that appropriate educational outcomes are established and implemented for all deaf students and an assessment and monitoring program is implemented to ensure that each deaf student makes satisfactory progress, with the focus on equity of outcomes for deaf and hearing students;</p> <p>9. Strongly asserts that it is essential that appropriately competent and knowledgeable deaf people receive appropriate training so they can be employed as teachers, educational professionals and members of educational teams;</p> <p>10. Calls on education providers to provide resources for the development and delivery of effective Auslan and Deaf Studies (history, culture, etc.) programs, not only to deaf children, but also to their families, teachers and other professionals;</p> <p>11. Calls on education providers to ensure that deaf learners who are placed in mainstream educational settings have equitable access to the services of trained and qualified sign language interpreters, support services, deaf peers and role models, and full participation in both educational and co-curricular activities;</p> <p>12. Supports further research into:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cognition and learning in deaf children, and effective pedagogy;</li> <li>○ The development of strategies and valid instruments for teaching and assessing features of Auslan and the development of sign language fluency; and</li> <li>○ The relative benefits of acquiring an education using direct and indirect (via an interpreter) communication pedagogies;</li> </ul> <p>13. Calls for recognition under Australian law of Deaf people's right to use Auslan so that education can be officially and legally delivered in Auslan for deaf students;</p> <p>14. Deaf Australia endorses the Statement of Principle on the Education for the Deaf by International Congress of Educators of the Deaf (Vancouver – 2010).</p>
<b>Keywords</b>	Deaf Education, bilingual, bicultural, UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Auslan, Language, Human Rights
<b>References</b>	<p>Dawkins, J (1991). Australia's Language: The Australian Language and Literacy Policy. Australian Government Printing Service: Canberra</p> <p>Deaf Australia Vision 2020 - <a href="http://www.deafau.org.au">www.deafau.org.au</a></p> <p>Deaf Australia – Policy Advice Paper on Early Intervention for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children (2009) <a href="http://www.deafau.org.au">http://www.deafau.org.au</a></p>

	<p>Disability Discrimination Act (1992)  <a href="http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/dda1992264">www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/dda1992264</a></p> <p>Francois Grosjean (2001) - 'The right of deaf child to grow up bilingually' <a href="http://www.francoisgrosjean.ch/sign_deaf_en.html">www.francoisgrosjean.ch/sign_deaf_en.html</a></p> <p>Grosjean, F. (1992) The Bilingual and the Bicultural person in the Hearing and in the Deaf World. In Sign Language Studies, Winter 1992</p> <p>International Congress on Education of the Deaf ( ICED) Vancouver 2010 – Statement of Principle -  <a href="http://www.deafau.org.au/download/iced22072010.pdf">http://www.deafau.org.au/download/iced22072010.pdf</a></p> <p>UN Convention on the Rights of Children - <a href="http://www.unicef.org/crc/">http://www.unicef.org/crc/</a></p> <p>UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (2006)  <a href="http://www.un.org/disabilities/">http://www.un.org/disabilities/</a></p> <p>World Federation of Deaf Education Rights for Deaf Children (2007)  <a href="http://www.wfdeaf.org/pdf/policy_child_ed.pdf">http://www.wfdeaf.org/pdf/policy_child_ed.pdf</a></p>
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<b>Amendment Dates</b>	<i>List the dates the policy has been amended (Day/Month/ Year)</i>
<b>Date for Next Review</b>	<i>November 2013</i>
<b>Related Policy, Procedure and Guidelines</b>	<i>Terminology policy on deaf, Deaf and Hard of Hearing terms</i>
<b>Policies Superseded by this Policy</b>	<i>Auslan Policy – section on Education</i>