

# The specialist needs of deaf children and the role of Teachers of the Deaf

A briefing for commissioners (England)

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Produced by the National Deaf Children's Society with support from the British Association of Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People (BATOD) and the National Sensory Impairment Partnership (NatSIP)

## 1. Summary

This briefing sets out the role of Teachers of the Deaf (ToDs) in meeting the unique and specialist needs of deaf children and young people. It provides evidence, statutory context, and key considerations for anyone involved in reviewing or commissioning services for deaf children.

We believe that ToDs are at the forefront of early intervention. A world in which there are fewer qualified ToDs will likely contribute to a vicious cycle of late intervention and low parental confidence where deaf children and young people are more likely to:

- start school without age-appropriate language and communication skills or be school ready. This holds deaf children back the start, making it harder for them to catch up, and entrenching existing attainment gaps
- experience barriers to communication at home with their families and in education, leading to isolation and an increased likelihood of poor emotional and mental health
- see mainstream teachers struggling to meet their needs, undermining inclusion and creating further stress on an already overburdened workforce
- need statutory Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans or specialist placements that could have been avoided if effective early intervention support had been provided.

Where commissioners are considering any changes to specialist deaf services or provision, we expect them to set out how deaf children and their family's needs will be met. If they will be met by other professionals, we expect the commissioner to provide evidence that these other professionals have the requisite skills and knowledge about deaf children.

## 2. A note on terms

**Teachers of the Deaf (ToD)** are specialist educators with expertise in supporting deaf children and young people, as well as their families. The term is used to distinguish this role from mainstream teachers who may have a deaf pupil in their class but do not have specialist training. Other terms sometimes used include Hearing Impairment Teachers and Qualified Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People.

We use the term **deaf children** to include any child or young person with any level of hearing loss. For example, a deaf child might:

- have mild, moderate, severe or profound hearing loss
- be deaf in one or both ears
- have permanent or temporary hearing loss such as glue ear
- have been deaf from birth or become deaf later in childhood

- communicate in different ways, including sign language, speech and lip-reading, or any combination of these
- be in mainstream education or attend specialist provision (such as a resource provision or a special school)
- use any type of hearing aid or implant, or not use any form of technology.

### 3. Background

- ToDs are qualified teachers who have gained an additional mandatory post-graduate qualification (MQ) in teaching deaf children, from one of five UK universities, studied over one year (full-time) or two years (part-time).
- The Department for Education prescribes the competencies<sup>1</sup> required for this qualification in England, most recently updated in 2023.
- ToDs work with children from birth through to adulthood, across home, early years, mainstream, and specialist deaf schools and settings. This can be both in a peripatetic and or setting-based role. Some will also have an additional post-graduate qualification in educational audiology.
- Early identification of deafness through newborn screening has strengthened the role of ToDs in supporting families during the formative years. There is a strong evidence base that early intervention can significantly and positively impact outcomes.
- ToDs may lead on or facilitate the multi-disciplinary working across health education and social care and can play a key role in advocating for deaf children and their families.
- The role is distinct from classroom teachers, teaching assistants, and speech and language therapists, who all have different areas of expertise and make a different contribution to deaf children’s development.

### 4. Key facts

- There are around 46,000 deaf children in England.<sup>2</sup>
- Half of deaf children are born deaf. The other half become deaf during childhood.<sup>3</sup>
- Over 90% of deaf children are born to hearing parents with no prior experience in deafness.<sup>4</sup>
- ToDs are a key part of the early years pathway for parents of deaf children. 93% of families whose child is identified as deaf though the newborn hearing screening programme were contacted by a ToD within two days of any referral, with visits and support usually beginning soon after.<sup>5</sup>
- 78% of school-aged deaf children in the UK attend mainstream schools.<sup>6</sup>
- No hearing technology fully restores hearing. Even a mild deafness significantly affects education, communication, and wellbeing.<sup>7</sup>
- 42% of deaf children achieved a “good level of development” in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in 2024, compared to 68% of all children.<sup>8</sup> We believe that deaf children should achieve the same range of outcomes as all children.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.gov.uk/guidance/mandatory-qualifications-specialist-teachers](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mandatory-qualifications-specialist-teachers)

<sup>2</sup> Consortium for Research into Deaf Education (CRIDE) 2025 England report. [www.ndcs.org.uk/cride](https://www.ndcs.org.uk/cride)

<sup>3</sup> Fortnum et al. [Prevalence of Permanent Childhood Hearing Impairment in the United Kingdom and Implications for Universal Neonatal Hearing Screening: Questionnaire based ascertainment study](#). BMJ. 2001. 323:536.

<sup>4</sup> Mitchell, R.E. and Karchmer, M.A. [Chasing the Mythical Ten Percent: Parental Hearing Status of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students in the United States](#). Sign Language Studies. 2004. 4: 138–163.

<sup>5</sup> Consortium for Research into Deaf Education (CRIDE) 2025 England report.. [www.ndcs.org.uk/cride](https://www.ndcs.org.uk/cride). [Where](#) contact in two days is not possible, this is usually due to parent availability or the referral taking place during the summer holidays.

<sup>6</sup> Consortium for Research into Deaf Education (CRIDE) 2025 England report.. [www.ndcs.org.uk/cride](https://www.ndcs.org.uk/cride). A further 6% of deaf children attend mainstream schools with resource provisions. 2% attend special schools for deaf children. 13% attend special schools not specifically for deaf children.

<sup>7</sup> Archbold, S. et al. [Experiences of Young People with Mild/Moderate Hearing Loss: Views of parents and teachers](#). 2015. Ear Foundation.

<sup>8</sup> Source: [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/early-years-foundation-stage-profile-results-2023-to-2024](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/early-years-foundation-stage-profile-results-2023-to-2024)

## 5. Specialist needs of deaf children

When considering the role of ToDs, it is important that we consider the specialist needs of deaf children and their families. Their mandatory qualification and experience mean that ToDs are uniquely placed to meet these needs. Larger specialist education services for deaf children will also be well-placed to support the development of further specialisms (such as in early years). The following sections summarise these needs. More detail on peripatetic ToDs is shown in Annex A.

### 5.1. Early years support to deaf children within the home

The importance of the formative early years in effective child development is well-established. Research is clear that children who receive family-centred early interventions from point of identification have better language outcomes than those who received intervention later.<sup>9</sup>

In the early years, following identification of deafness, many of the child's specialist needs will be met through the family. Given i) the impact of deafness on the development of language and communication and ii) the fact that many families will be new to deafness, ToDs will play a key role in ensuring families receive high-quality family-centred early intervention support.

This includes addressing the following needs:

- providing specialist information on deafness, technology, language choices and child development
- supporting families to make informed choices (for example, around language approaches or education settings), ensuring they understand the implications and risks around such choices
- building parental confidence and capacity in early interaction and communication strategies
- coordinating with audiologists, speech and language therapists, sign language tutors, and social care
- offering guidance on creating a rich home language environment
- supporting the use and management of hearing technologies
- facilitating access to peer support (connecting families with others) and role models (deaf adults)
- conducting and interpreting specialist assessments of language and communication
- understanding and identifying the impact of deafness where other additional needs are present
- supporting families to navigate the benefits and SEND system.

### 5.2. Support to deaf children within mainstream early years and education settings

Most deaf children are educated in mainstream settings where deafness is a low incidence need and there is no onsite specialist provision. As deafness is a low incidence need, opportunities for mainstream staff to develop and/or maintain any CPD in this area is challenging. We know that children with all levels of deafness can experience significant challenges in accessing education.

Surveys of teachers have shown, for example, the need for ongoing and targeted support. For example, in a Teacher Tapp poll of over 5,300 teachers in England, 96% reported that it was important they received ongoing advice and support from ToD if they had a deaf child in their classroom.

In these situations, peripatetic ToDs will play a key role in securing effective inclusion through:

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<sup>9</sup> Holzinger, D. et al. [Early onset of family centred intervention predicts language outcomes in children with hearing loss](#). International Journal of Pediatric Otorhinolaryngology. 2011.

- providing tailored and targeted advice and information on curriculum delivery and teaching and learning strategies to teachers, SENCOs, and support staff on deaf-friendly practice both to inform ordinary available provision and SEN Support
- delivering direct teaching and interventions tailored to individual needs
- monitoring progress through specialist assessments which can inform teaching and learning
- providing statutory input into Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessments
- supporting hearing technology use and optimising listening environments
- advising on reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act 2010 and access arrangements for exams
- promoting social and emotional wellbeing and positive deaf identity through an enhanced specialist deaf curriculum<sup>10</sup>
- engaging with other professionals to ensure that multi-agency support is well coordinated
- support transitions between settings and into adulthood.

### 5.3. Support to deaf children within specialist settings

In this context, by specialist settings, we mean those which have a dedicated focus on deafness. They might include resource provisions or units within a mainstream school, or special schools for deaf children.

ToDs provide specialist provision through:

- delivering direct teaching and interventions tailored to individual needs
- collaborating with other school staff and provide the necessary resources and support to promote effective inclusion
- ensuring that deaf children and young people can learn through their preferred language and communication method, which may vary for different parts of the curriculum
- providing a peer group which is especially important for those children communicating through British Sign Language (BSL) and/or sign systems
- delivering an enhanced curriculum specific to deafness
- providing intensive, flexible support for those children who are deaf with additional needs
- removing barriers to inclusion in all extended school activities and puts support into place so children are socially included. This should include arranging additional transport and communication support where needed.

## 6. Evidencing the impact of ToDs

The specialist needs of deaf children are well-evidenced, through documents such as the Family Centred Early Intervention (FCEI) principles.<sup>11</sup>

However, identifying the unique impact of ToDs is methodologically difficult. Deaf children do not grow up in laboratories where support from a ToD can be isolated as a variable, amongst all the other factors that may impact on deaf children (such as socio-economic status, parental capacity, quality of education settings, etc.). A randomised controlled trial where some deaf children are put into a control group and denied support early support from a ToD would clearly not be ethical. Moreover, the support provided by ToDs cannot be limited to one single 'intervention' that can be easily tracked and monitored. Instead, ToDs will provide ongoing holistic and responsive support over time, in line with the FCEI principles. These methodological challenges are not unique to ToDs.

However, a range of different evidence sources point to the difference that ToDs make.

<sup>10</sup> [www.batod.org.uk/resources-category/specialist-deaf-curriculum-framework/](http://www.batod.org.uk/resources-category/specialist-deaf-curriculum-framework/)

<sup>11</sup> [www.fcei.at/unit/fcei/positionstatement/fceiprinciples](http://www.fcei.at/unit/fcei/positionstatement/fceiprinciples)

**Families:** Research by the University of Birmingham<sup>12</sup> has shown the positive value that families and deaf young people put on the support they received from Teachers of the Deaf. In addition, in response to our annual Deaf Children Today survey in 2025, 78% of respondents considered their child's ToD service to be good or very good. They reported that regular, consistent ToD support enabled them to build resilience, capacity, and agency. Issues raised often related to limited ToD capacity. For example, some parents sought more support from ToDs to make mainstream settings accessible.

The ToD role in the wider early years pathway was also cited in the Kingdon review of children's hearing services<sup>13</sup> for the Department of Health and Social Care. For example, some respondents referred to the "excellent support" received from ToDs, "as well as being impressed with the speed of their first referral and feeling like staff listened to their concerns". Others cited a need for more Teachers of the Deaf and closer working relationships.

In another paper<sup>14</sup>, parents of children with unilateral deafness (in one ear) also spoke positively about the work of ToDs. The research found that: "the majority of participants describe the Teacher of the Deaf as their most valued resource. Their role in liaising with their child and with the child's school about their hearing needs was described as 'invaluable'." It also notes how ToDs increased parents' knowledge of different strategies to support their child, helping them to make effective choices.

**Schools:** As reported earlier, in a Teacher Tapp poll of over 5,300 teachers in England, 96% reported that it was important they received ongoing advice and support from ToD if they had a deaf child in their classroom. In a separate UK-wide poll in 2019, where teachers had received support from a ToD, 96% rated it as good or very good.

**Government:** The Department for Education frequently highlights the important role of ToDs. In response to a parliamentary question<sup>15</sup> in 2025, a Minister at the Department for Education stated that: "The Department recognises the importance of Teachers of the Deaf and is continuing to support the pipeline of these teachers."

**Ofsted:** A focused report on deafness<sup>16</sup> found that when deaf children progressed well, it was because "services were underpinned by a good understanding of the need for specialist services for deaf children and a strong commitment to maintain them." Many inspections by Ofsted of local area special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) support have commented on the support provided by specialist teachers as a strength. To take one example<sup>17</sup>, inspectors found that:

"The team that works with children and young people with sensory impairment offers a strong, needs-led service. As a result, children and young people with a visual or hearing impairment are well supported. They are well prepared for their next steps and provided with bespoke support to increase their independence."

**UK research:** A rapid evidence review<sup>18</sup> for the Department for Education set out findings that "underscore the importance of collaborative planning between teachers and specialists", going on to say that "teachers must be supported to understand the diverse needs of students with sensory and/or physical difficulties

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<sup>12</sup> [www.ndcs.org.uk/advice-and-support/all-advice-and-support-topics/research-and-data-childhood-deafness/education-support-research/evaluating-impact-peripatetic-teachers-deaf](https://www.ndcs.org.uk/advice-and-support/all-advice-and-support-topics/research-and-data-childhood-deafness/education-support-research/evaluating-impact-peripatetic-teachers-deaf)

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/kingdon-review-of-childrens-hearing-services-final-report/kingdon-review-of-childrens-hearing-services-final-report>

<sup>14</sup> Hussain S, Pryce H, Neary A, Hall A. [Exploring how parents of children with unilateral hearing loss make habilitation decisions: a qualitative study](#). Int J Audiol. 2021 Mar;60(3):183-190.

<sup>15</sup> <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2025-03-21/40298>

<sup>16</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/communication-is-the-key](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/communication-is-the-key)

<sup>17</sup> <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50252240>

<sup>18</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68d66b09275fc9339a248d4b/Identifying\\_and\\_supporting\\_children\\_and\\_young\\_people\\_with\\_sensory\\_and\\_or\\_physical\\_needs\\_a\\_rapid\\_evidence\\_review.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68d66b09275fc9339a248d4b/Identifying_and_supporting_children_and_young_people_with_sensory_and_or_physical_needs_a_rapid_evidence_review.pdf)

and to confidently make necessary adaptations.” Elsewhere, a rapid evidence assessment of educational interventions to support deaf children for the Welsh Government discusses the important contribution that ToDs can make as “agents of change” by, for example, adapting the education environment to facilitate access to learning and promoting inclusion within the classroom.<sup>19</sup>

**International research:** An expansive international literature review found that: “The learning styles and needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing students differ sufficiently from those of their hearing peers to require specialised programming and teaching methods or strategies if children are to achieve their full potential. Special assistance thus is also required for teachers.”<sup>20</sup>

## 7. Is it statutory?

There are two direct references to ToDs in legislation or statutory guidance.

1. Those teaching classes of deaf children must hold an appropriate qualification approved by the Secretary of State for Education<sup>21</sup>. The requirements for this qualification is set out on the Department for Education website<sup>22</sup>. The SEND Code of Practice<sup>23</sup> reaffirms this requirement and goes further by stating that “Teachers working in an advisory role to support such pupils should also hold the appropriate qualification”.
2. Advice from a Qualified Teacher of the Deaf is required for any assessment for an Education, Health and Care plan.<sup>24</sup>

There are also a range of wider SEND duties where a ToD is likely to play a key role in ensuring that the local authority can fulfil their statutory duties in relation to deaf children. For example:

- where a deaf child has been identified as having a special educational need, local authorities are required under the Children and Families Act 2014 to make sure that the child receives the support they need to facilitate their development and achieve “the best possible educational and other outcomes”
- the SEND Code of Practice states that local authorities should adopt a key working approach which provides children, young people and parents with a single point of contact to ensure holistic provision and co-ordination.

Deaf children also fall within the remit of the Equality Act 2010. For example, local authorities:

- must make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services, to ensure that disabled children and young people are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers. This duty is anticipatory - it requires thought to be given in advance to what disabled children and young people might require and what adjustments might need to be made to prevent that disadvantage
- are also covered by the public sector equality duty and, when carrying out their functions, must have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations between disabled and non-disabled people.

Provision of support from ToDs to deaf children aged 0 to 25 is a mechanism by which local authorities can demonstrate how they are meeting their Equality Act duties in relation to deaf children.

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<sup>19</sup> Terlektsj, E; Wootten, A; Douglas, G; Ellis, L; Hewett, R; Hodges, L; McLinden, M; Ware, J; Williams, L,; (2019). [A Rapid Evidence Assessment of the effectiveness of educational interventions to support children and young people with hearing impairment](#). Cardiff: Welsh Government, GSR report number 40/2019

<sup>20</sup> Marschark, M & Spencer, P.E [Evidence of Best Practice Models and Outcomes in the Education of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Children: An international review](#). 2009. Center for Education Research Partnerships, National Technical Institute for the Deaf, Rochester Institute of Technology.

<sup>21</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/uk/si/2003/1662/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uk/si/2003/1662/contents)

<sup>22</sup> [www.gov.uk/guidance/mandatory-qualifications-specialist-teachers](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/mandatory-qualifications-specialist-teachers)

<sup>23</sup> See paragraph 6.61 - [www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25)

<sup>24</sup> See section 6(2) of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations (2014) [www.legislation.gov.uk/uk/si/2014/1530/regulation/6/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uk/si/2014/1530/regulation/6/made)

## 8. Alternative approaches

The mandatory qualification provides education settings with a level of reassurance that ToDs have the requisite knowledge and skills to meet the above specialist needs. We recognise that some needs can be met by other professionals, but they must have the appropriate knowledge and expertise. There must also be a focus on collaborative working.

- **Speech and language therapists (SLTs)** –some SLTs are expert in deafness and play a key role in supporting schools and families. However, the majority will have limited access to training or further CPD as there is no recognised qualification in deafness. SLTs are not qualified teachers and may only deliver specific interventions or approaches, for example auditory verbal strategies, rather than the wider support that ToDs provide.
- **Teaching assistants/communication support workers** deliver valuable support to individual pupils as part of targeted intervention or ongoing classroom support, but they cannot carry out a teaching role and may have limited expertise around technology, deaf identity or the wider needs of deaf children beyond the child that they are supporting. Unless they hold relevant qualifications, they will be unable to carry out many specialist assessments with deaf children.
- **BSL tutors** hold a qualification in teaching BSL and may also have lived experienced of deafness. They are a key part of the wider team but it is not their role to advise settings on wider curriculum and teaching strategies or childhood development.

Any alternative approaches being considered must be needs-led and evidence-based, not budget-driven.

When appointing to a new ToD role, it can often be necessary to recruit a qualified teacher and then train them to become a qualified ToD. In most cases, if learning part-time, it takes two years to qualify. It is important to ensure that trainee ToDs have the time they need to study and undergo placements, and receive ongoing supervision and support from a qualified and experienced ToD. It is especially important that deaf children still, as much as possible, have access to the specialist support they need. Commissioners will need to think carefully about how to ensure this continuity of specialist support while any ToDs are undergoing training. Advance workforce planning will help to mitigate any risks in this area.

## 9. Making changes to deaf children's specialist support

Where local authorities are considering making any changes to support for deaf children, there are a number of statutory duties that they must consider. For example:

- Section 27 of the Children and Families Act requires local authorities to keep provision for disabled children under review to ensure it is sufficient to meet their education, training and social care needs and that there are no gaps in provision. Disabled children and their parents must be consulted as part of any such review, as well as in any work to develop the Local Offer.
- Paragraph 4.19 of the SEND Code of Practice states that: "Local authorities must keep their educational and training provision and social care provision under review and this includes the sufficiency of that provision. When considering any reorganisation of SEN provision decision makers must make clear how they are satisfied that the proposed alternative arrangements are likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of educational provision for children with SEN."
- The Equality Act 2010 requires local authorities to ensure that any changes promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons and to take steps to take account of a person's disability. They must also demonstrate due and specific regard to how any changes will impact on disabled people. This will require the local authority to provide an audit trail or documentation to show how this regard was had. As part of this, there is an implicit 'duty of inquiry' on the local authority

to take reasonable steps to investigate the impact of any decisions they may make, including through public consultation.

## 10. Summary

Teachers of the Deaf are not an optional extra. They are:

- **Specialist** – uniquely qualified to meet deaf children’s needs,
- **Enabling** – crucial to inclusion, equality, and positive life outcomes.
- **Valued** – recognised by deaf children, families and schools for the impact they make.

Commissioners must ensure ToD services are sufficiently staffed, specialist, and accessible across 0–25, and that ToDs are working effectively with other roles to delivery family-centred early intervention support. To do otherwise risks poorer outcomes, increased statutory intervention, and a breach of legal duties.

## 11. Other resources that may be helpful

- British Association of Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People (BATOD): Articulating the specialism resources<sup>25</sup>
- The National Sensory Impairment Partnership (NatSIP): Checklist for service alignment with legislation<sup>26</sup>
- Quality standards for early years support, peripatetic services and resource provisions<sup>27</sup>
- Council for Disabled Children guides to the disability duties in the Equality Act<sup>28</sup>
- Disabled Children: A Legal Handbook<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> [www.batod.org.uk/information/batod-publication-articulating-the-specialism-series/](http://www.batod.org.uk/information/batod-publication-articulating-the-specialism-series/)

<sup>26</sup> [www.natsip.org.uk/doc-library-login/natsip-guidance-on/checklist-for-service-alignment-with-legislation](http://www.natsip.org.uk/doc-library-login/natsip-guidance-on/checklist-for-service-alignment-with-legislation)

<sup>27</sup> See [www.ndcs.org.uk/advice-and-support/all-advice-and-support-topics/education-and-learning/education-professionals/decision-makers-education](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/advice-and-support/all-advice-and-support-topics/education-and-learning/education-professionals/decision-makers-education)

<sup>28</sup> <https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/resources/all-resources/filter/educators/new-series-cdc-guides-disability-duties-equality-act>

<sup>29</sup> <https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/resources/all-resources/filter/inclusion-send/disabled-children-legal-handbook-3rd-edition>

## Annex A: More detail on how peripatetic ToDs contribute to meeting the specialist needs of deaf children and their families

### Support to families in the early years

Family needs	How ToDs help to meet these needs
Information about deafness following identification. In many cases, this will be in the weeks following birth, where a child has been identified as deaf via newborn hearing screening.	Ensuring families receive specialist and accessible information, support and advice following identification of deafness. In most areas, there is an expectation that ToDs will make contact with the family in the first few days following formal identification.
To feel more confident about raising a child with deafness.	Building the capacity of families. Identifying their values, strengths, opportunities, needs and challenges to consider how best to provide support in a way that is family-centred and addresses their unique needs.
For basic needs to be met and for wider support to be joined up.	<p>Collaborating with other professionals to ensure that basic needs are met, to reduce any barriers to family engagement in early intervention.</p> <p>Ongoing collaboration and coordinate with other multi-disciplinary specialists, such as audiologists, sign language tutors, and speech and language therapists.</p>
To access peer support from other families who have already walked through their shoes.	Facilitating connections with other families with deaf children, so that families can benefit from peer support.
To understand the different possibilities and futures that their child may have as a deaf person.	Facilitating connections with deaf young people and adults, so that families can benefit from the perspective of those with lived experience of deafness, and develop an understanding that deafness will not a barrier to their child becoming a confident deaf adult.
To understand the importance of and the role that they can play in creating a rich home language environment	Offering guidance and support. Modelling different activities that can be embedded naturally into daily routines and play, and which maximise two-way meaningful interactions.
To know how their child is developing and if there are any areas where further early intervention is needed.	<p>Guiding the family through expected developmental outcomes for their deaf child.</p> <p>Carrying out specialist assessments, that have been normed for use with deaf children (and which often require a specialist qualification to administer), to track deaf children's outcomes, particularly in language and communication. Interpreting and explaining the results to families. Providing ongoing monitoring.</p> <p>Supporting families to make adjustments where necessary. Where assessments indicate a risk of language delay or other needs, working with the family and other specialists to provide more tailored interventions.</p>
To understand the different choices that can be made for their child (for example, in terms of languages, education, etc.) and	Providing families with accurate, objective, impartial, and nonjudgmental information, as free from bias as possible, regarding opportunities that could potentially support the

the implications and risks around such choices.	family. Supporting families to make informed choices, and flexibility and adaptability around those choices. Ensuring families understand the implications and risks around such choices.  Subject to these choices, facilitating access to additional support or provision (for example, supporting families to learn sign language).
If using hearing technologies, to understand how to use effectively and consistently.	Providing technical, practical and emotional support to families in managing hearing technologies.

The above list is not intended to be exhaustive. Many of the examples have been drawn from the Family-Centred Early Intervention principles<sup>30</sup>, a set of evidence-based principles developed by international experts in deafness.

### Support to deaf children in mainstream early years and education settings

Child's needs	How ToDs help to meet these needs
To be able to fully access support and education in a setting, alongside their peers.	Ensuring mainstream practitioners receive information, training and support on teaching and support strategies that are deaf-friendly and inclusive, and which reflect the individual needs and development of the deaf child.  Delivering direct teaching and interventions tailored to individual needs.
If using spoken language, being able to hear and understand their teacher.  If using hearing technologies, being confident that they are being used effectively.	Providing advice on the listening environment to create optimal listening conditions.  Securing the effective use of hearing technologies in the education setting. Supporting deaf children and young people to independently manage any hearing technologies they use.
If being supported by teaching assistants or communication support workers, being confident that they are appropriately skilled and working effectively with classroom practitioners.	Supporting and training teaching assistants and communication support workers. Working as part of a team with the classroom teacher to ensure the deaf child's needs are being met.  Advocating for the use of appropriately qualified staff.
For support to be tailored to their individual needs, and for additional support to be provided, where there are challenges or gaps.	Carrying out specialist assessments, that have been normed for use with deaf children, to track their outcomes. Working with practitioners and the families to ensure that the results are understood and are used to inform teaching practice. Providing ongoing monitoring.  Provision of advice to inform assessments for any statutory education plans or annual reviews. In England, the involvement of a ToD in an assessment for an Education, Health and Care plan is itself a statutory requirement.

<sup>30</sup> [www.fcei.at/unit/fcei/positionstatement/fceiprinciples](http://www.fcei.at/unit/fcei/positionstatement/fceiprinciples)

	Providing direct 1 to 1 teaching support or within a small group, as required.
To be confident that wider specialist support is joined up.	Continue to collaborate and coordinate with other multi-disciplinary specialists, such as audiologists and speech and language therapists.
To have friends, be happy and be confident in their identity.	Using their knowledge of how deafness can be a risk factor, supporting the development of good social and emotional wellbeing, as well as the development of a positive identity as a deaf person.
To be on a level playing field with their peers when it comes to any examinations.	Noting normal ways of working and advising on reasonable adjustments that may be needed during examinations, so that education settings can meet their duties under the Equality Act 2010.
To be confident that, when they make a transition within education and later, to adulthood, the support they receive will be seamless, with the right support in place.	<p>Liaising with other practitioners to make sure they are aware of the deaf child's needs, views and preferences, prior to any transition. Advising on any new adjustments that may be required in the new setting.</p> <p>As the young person transitions to adulthood, providing information on wider support available to them and supporting them to become as independent as possible.</p>

Again, the above list is not intended to be exhaustive.