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# The development of communication and language in deaf and severely hard of hearing children: implications for the future

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### Abstract

Severe hearing impairment is seldom detected in children before the age of 6–12 months as parent–infant interaction is similar to that of a normal parent–child interaction. This is probably due to an innate capacity of infants to take information in one sensory modality and translate it into another, called amodal perception. The roots of language are traced to early proto-conversations, as well as to early pretend play. Relationships are viewed as the context in which socialisation takes place, basic competences emerge, regulations of emotions develop and communication skills are acquired. If habilitation after diagnosis of a severe hearing impairment primarily is focused on an oral–aural approach, natural patterns of communication between parent and child will gradually disappear, which will have negative implications on the development of these children. If, instead, they are allowed to develop those means of communication

that are easy for them to produce and to perceive, positive consequences have been registered on the development of communication and language, as well as on their socio-emotional and cognitive development. When these children have been given opportunities to become bilingual with a signed and a written and/or spoken language, it has enabled them to attend higher education, to have a qualified job and thereby a good life in the future.



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## Keywords

Communication; Deaf; Hard of hearing; Language

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