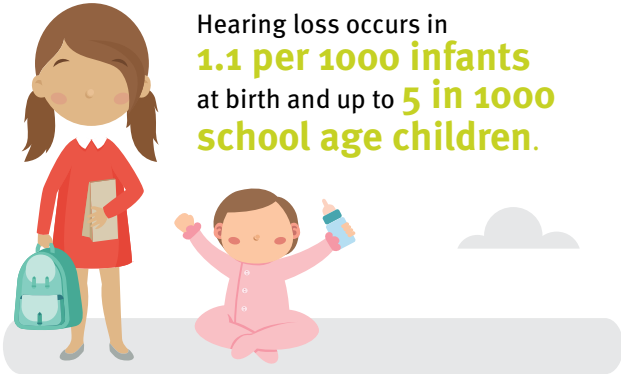


Deafness, hearing loss and mental health

Demographics



Hearing loss occurs in **1.1 per 1000 infants** at birth and up to **5 in 1000 school age children.**

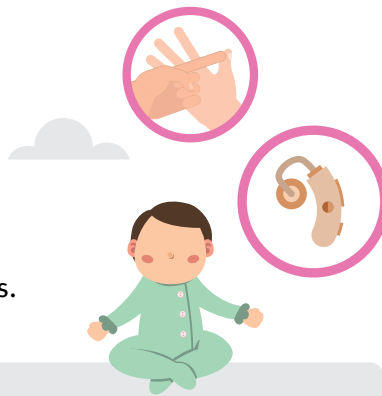
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have the **highest rates of middle ear disease in the world.**

Middle ear disease is often accompanied by hearing loss which can last weeks or months. Severe untreated middle ear disease may result in permanent hearing loss.



Mental health

Anyone can experience a mental health problem regardless of the level of their hearing loss. Children who use **Auslan, wear hearing aids or have cochlear implants** can also develop mental health problems.



Hearing loss or deafness may put a child more at risk of developing mental health problems. This can be because of:

- Attachment difficulties
- Lack of shared language within the family
- Delayed communication (Auslan or oral)
- Difficulty with incidental learning
- Isolation
- Delayed theory of mind
- Psychosocial problems

It is normal for a child or young person to experience feeling down, tense, angry or anxious but if these feelings persist for a long time they may be part of a mental health problem.

Mental health problems affect how someone thinks and the way they function.

It's important to get help for these problems as early as possible.

If a child or young person needs support for their mental health, a General Practitioner (GP) can help.

Warning signs of a mental health problem



Loss of interest



Extreme changes to feelings



Withdrawal or feeling overwhelmed



Outbursts of behaviour



Day to day tasks get harder



Changes in sleeping, eating, use of hearing device



Using drugs/alcohol to escape



Taking more dangerous risks



Decline in grades at school



Working together to support mental health

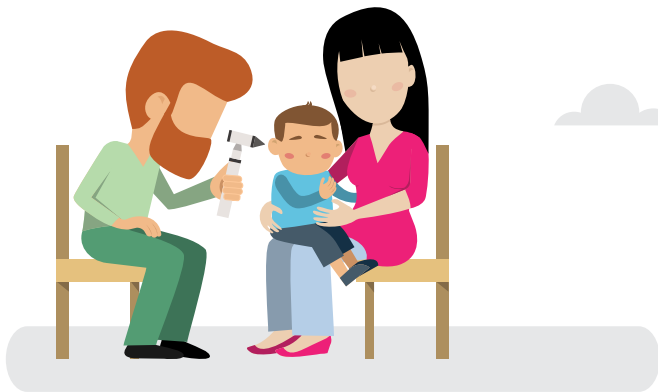
Tips for working with Deaf or hard of hearing children and young people:

Consider the **communication needs** of the child and family

Consider the **acoustic environment** (Is it too noisy? Should you move closer?)



Consider the social and emotional wellbeing of the child and family unit



When planning for NDIS consider **psychosocial domains** for children who are deaf or hard of hearing

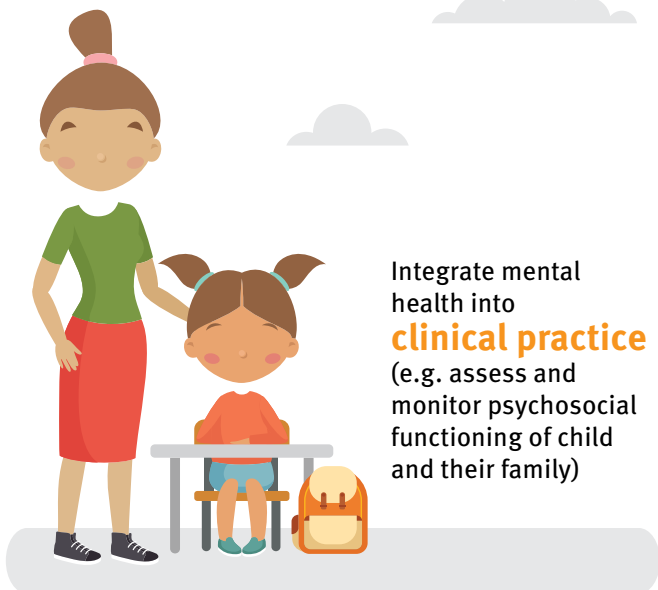
Always request a professional level **Auslan interpreter** (If the child or family uses Auslan)

Integrate mental health and wellbeing into **service planning and delivery** (e.g modification to policy, procedure, training)



Integrate mental health into **clinical practice** (e.g. assess and monitor psychosocial functioning of child and their family)

A child is much more than their Deafness. Consider the child's wellbeing, identity, strengths and goals.



Contact us

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10/199 Grey Street, South Brisbane 4101

t 07 3310 9444
w childrens.health.qld.gov.au/mental-health

