



Cued Speech and the Deaf Child in a Hearing Family

A Position Statement of the National Cued Speech Association

The National Cued Speech Association (NCSA) believes parents/primary caregivers are the best language models for children. Over 90 percent of children who are deaf or hard of hearing are born to hearing parents. For children who are deaf or hard of hearing to be fully included in the family, they must have full access to their parents'/primary caregivers' home language(s). Early and consistent use of cued language will allow the child who is deaf or hard of hearing to develop language at the rate of typically hearing peers, and to develop skills necessary for kindergarten readiness and future opportunity to meet his/her full academic potential.

Families who cue consistently provide the child who is deaf or hard of hearing with full access to communication and language in the home, and therefore, full inclusion in family activities. The NCSA believes that, in addition to parents/primary caregivers and siblings, extended family members and friends should be encouraged to learn to cue.

Cueing enables hearing parents/primary caregivers to quickly learn how to express their native language(s) visually, thus equipping them with a means to provide access for their child to the language(s) of the home. As with all children, those who are deaf or hard of hearing want and need to be full participants in their family's language(s) and culture(s). Cued Speech is intended for use by parents/primary caregivers of children who are deaf/hard of hearing who wish to develop their children's language skills in their own native English or other traditionally spoken language(s).

Children of hearing parents/primary caregivers should also be provided with opportunities for interacting with a variety of deaf/hard of hearing role models and peers. The exposure to role models who are deaf/hard of hearing is crucial to not only a child's potential success, but also his/her well-being and self-esteem.

The NCSA asserts that parents/primary caregivers have the right to decide the mode of communication used to convey their own language(s) and culture(s) to their children. Parents/primary caregivers also have the right to use Cued Speech, singly or in combination with other modes of communication. As parents/primary caregivers are the most important factor in a child's nurturing as well as in their language development, the parents/primary caregivers' choices need to be respected. The freedom to make informed choices is essential; educational professionals, other parents, and deaf and hard of hearing people must recognize and respect choices made by a child's parents/primary caregivers.

The NCSA also asserts that parents/primary caregivers have the responsibility of following through on their commitment to Cued Speech by cueing accurately and consistently as a family whenever spoken language is used. A great deal of a child's language is acquired incidentally through "overheard" conversations; thus, it is essential for cueing to be used at all times in the presence of the child who is deaf or hard of hearing.

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