



Early Intervention and Cued Speech

A Position Statement of the National Cued Speech Association

Early access to communication and language is vital for developing emergent literacy skills. The National Cued Speech Association supports universal newborn hearing screening programs. It is critical for parents of children who are deaf/hard of hearing to know about their child's hearing results and learn interventions and systems for providing language access to their child as early as possible. The earlier the child accesses clear and complete visual communication, the sooner their language development can begin.

Children diagnosed as deaf/hard of hearing should receive services as requested from early interventionists, including teachers of deaf/hard of hearing, audiologists, and speech-language pathologists trained in working with children who are deaf/hard of hearing. The NCSA reaches out to Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) and Family-Based Organization (FBO) agencies, such as Hands & Voices, to provide information and resources to early interventionists.

Unbiased information about Cued Speech as a visual communication option should be presented at the time the child is identified as deaf or hard of hearing to allow families the opportunity to learn Cued Speech to convey cued English to provide early visual access to English for their newborn child. Parents/primary caregivers and early intervention specialists should receive formal training and direct support in learning Cued Speech so that they can provide accurate and consistent cued language stimulation and immersion at all times.

When immersed into a cued language environment from birth, a child who is deaf/hard of hearing can develop receptive and expressive language skills much more rapidly by visually internalizing the consonant-vowel phonemic code of the home's spoken language. In turn, this internal phonemic framework facilitates reading and writing literacy development. Children with auditory- or language-related disorders such as auditory neuropathy, autism, or Down's Syndrome, also benefit from this internal phonemic framework to maximize their potential for language, speech, and literacy.

Family Cued Speech camps (learning vacations) play a critical role in providing support to parents and professionals, as well as children who are deaf or hard of hearing. For those new to deafness and cueing, cue camps act as a comfortable, fun, and supportive environment to learn and practice Cued Speech with experienced cuers. Children who are deaf or hard of hearing are surrounded by other children who also cue. This cueing environment provides access to the traditionally spoken language(s) used around them.

*—Original Statement adopted 3-24-2006
—Revised Statement adopted 4-13-2007
—Revised Statement adopted 10-18-2019*