



International Informed Choice Policy

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Contents

	Page
1. Policy Statement	3
2. Child Rights Framework	3
3. Childhood Deafness	3
4. Position Statement	3

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The National Deaf Children's Society's policy, reflected in its vision, values and in its support and campaigning over many years, is to ensure that every family of every deaf child is supported with the information and guidance they need to make genuinely informed choices in the best interest of their child.
- 1.2 In the context of our international work, Deaf Child Worldwide shares this policy and recognises the importance of providing full and impartial advice to deaf children, deaf young people and their families as early as possible and throughout the child's life.

2. Child Rights Framework

- 2.1 Deaf Child Worldwide recognises the rights of all children as enshrined in international human rights instruments, most significantly the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC1990) and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD 2006). Our work is informed by the four general principles of the UNCRC, namely:
 - a) The right not to be discriminated against
 - b) The best interests of the child
 - c) The right to survival and development
 - d) The right to be heard.
- 2.2 Deaf Child Worldwide recognises the underlying principle of the Strategic Development Goals (SDGs)¹ – 'leave no one behind'. SDG3 (Good health and wellbeing) commits that everyone should be able to access quality essential healthcare services and SDG4 (Quality Education) commits that all children should have access to inclusive and equitable quality education and that there should be lifelong learning opportunities for all.

We recognise that deaf children are not defined solely by their deafness. Interrelated issues, such as gender (SDG 5) and poverty (SDG 1), must also be understood and addressed.

3. Childhood Deafness

- 3.1 Deaf Child Worldwide uses the term 'deaf' to refer to all levels of hearing loss **whether it is** mild, moderate severe or profound. Any level of hearing loss in childhood will have an impact on the way in which a child acquires and learns language (either spoken or sign) and on the way in which a child's cognitive, social and emotional skills develop.

4. Position Statement

¹ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>
International Informed Choice Policy reviewed July 2022

- 4.1 We aim to ensure that clear and impartial information on deafness and on approaches to the development of language and communication are available to deaf children, deaf young people and their families.
- 4.2 In addition we aim to ensure that deaf children, deaf young people and their families know what services and opportunities are available to them locally. This includes knowing about the availability of in-country services and support, including audiology services; hearing technology and support; education and work opportunities and any benefits available to disabled children and their families. It also includes information about the availability and location of peer support groups for parents and for deaf young people. We will do this by working with local partners to ensure that families have access to accurate information that is presented and delivered appropriately and in ways that are easily understood.
- 4.3 Where options and services are limited, Deaf Child Worldwide works to ensure that deaf children, young people and their families understand their rights and have access to information which will allow them to advocate for good quality and wide-ranging service provision so that informed choice can become a reality.