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MEDIA RELEASE

Deaf Children Australia offers parents a helping hand

Parents of deaf and hard of hearing children are now receiving support and information through the parenting skills program *Cool Kids, Cool parents*, offered by Deaf Children Australia.

More than 90% of deaf and hard of hearing children are born to families with little or no experience with deafness. Many parents report struggling with issues such as connecting with other families with a deaf child and how to cope when their child complains of feeling isolated or being bullied due to communication barriers.

The seven session workshop program has proved very successful in Victoria and is now being offered in New South Wales and Queensland, with the aim of holding workshops throughout Australia over the next twelve months.

Topics covered in the workshops include grief and stress management, sibling rivalry, parenting methods, and the choices and restrictions facing parents today. The workshops also offer parents information about assistive technology that is available such as flashing or vibrating alarms, subtitles on television and DVDs and personal amplifiers.

It is hoped that deaf and hearing impaired children will receive the support they need to enhance their communication skills and sense of identity, and to experience decreased isolation, increased self-esteem and greater participation in family and community life.

Damian Lacey, CEO of Deaf Children Australia, says: "Our vision at Deaf Children Australia is that deafness is no barrier. This program will also assist parents who have questions on any aspect of childhood deafness, need help with communication issues or advice on education. It will also bring families together so they can talk in a supportive, confidential environment, share experiences and understand that they are not alone."

Deaf Children Australia has been providing information, advocacy, support services and educational resources to enrich the lives of deaf and hard of hearing children and young adults for over 140 years. *Deaf Children Australia* represents the needs of 16,000 deaf and hard of hearing children throughout Australia. As a not-for-profit organisation, their service is made possible with the support of volunteers, the community, businesses and government financial grants.

For more information on Deaf Children Australia, please call 1800 645 916 or log on to www.deafchildreinaustralia.org.au. For more information about this press release or to request an interview, please call Julie Postance on 9539 5362 or jpostance@deafchildren.org.au.

Street:

597 St Kilda Road,
Melbourne, VIC 3004

Postal:

PO Box 6466,
St Kilda Road Central,
Melbourne, VIC 8008

Tel: + 61 3 9539 5300

Fax: +61 3 9525 2595

TTY: +61 3 9510 7143

Helpline: 1800 645 916

info@deafchildren.org.au

www.deafchildreinaustralia.org.au

ACN 108 025 207 ABN 57 108 025 207