



**Deaf Children
Australia**

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MEDIA RELEASE

Helpline provides support for parents of deaf kids

More and more families of deaf and hearing impaired children are reaching out for information and support from Deaf Children Australia's national free call Helpline.

Last year the DCA Helpline took 1,000 calls and emails from families or friends of deaf and hearing impaired children, students and professionals working with them.

"More than 90% of deaf and hearing impaired children are born to hearing parents" said Damian Lacey, CEO of Deaf Children Australia. "When a child is diagnosed as deaf, families are often overwhelmed. While trying to comprehend the news, they often struggle with the many choices they need to make about how best to support their child's development."

"Cochlear implants are a good choice for some children but do not work for all. For others, lip reading and speech, sign language, integrated school environments or specialist deaf facilities and schools might be best for them. These are all decisions that these families need to make."

The Helpline offers information and advice on deafness issues, parenting tips and services provided by Deaf Children Australia, or refers families to specialised services.

Parental concerns range from how to cope with the news that their baby is deaf, through to communication choices as they grow up, and what support deaf people can receive at university or at work.

The Helpline is a free, anonymous and confidential service and the staff is trained to respond in a balanced and impartial way. Funded by Deaf Children Australia, it is an essential resource that it is not currently offered anywhere else in Australia.

"There is obviously an enormous need in Australia for this service. The number of callers to the Helpline is growing rapidly as word about the service spreads," said Mr Lacey.

"The Helpline is particularly beneficial to families living in remote areas with no local access to the specialised resources that they need. It is also useful to health professionals and the public seeking information on deafness."

Deaf Children Australia's Helpline can be contacted on 1800 645 916 (telephone & TTY), and is available Australia-wide, Mon to Fri from 10am to 4pm (EST) or email helpline@deafchildren.org.au. For further information about Deaf Children Australia visit, www.deafchildreinaustralia.org.au. Deaf Children Australia is a not-for-profit organisation and represents the needs of 16,000 deaf and hearing impaired children throughout Australia.

Media enquiries

Julie Postance

Tel: 9539 5362

Mob: 0400 197 616

Email: 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