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MEDIA RELEASE



Parents of deaf and hearing impaired children find help

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

More than 90% of deaf and hearing impaired children are born to families with little or no experience of 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.

A series of workshops and discussion groups will be given to parents, covering topics such as grief and stress management, sibling rivalry, parenting methods, and the choices and restrictions facing parents today. 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.

Audra Rooney, mother of deaf five-year-old, Hayley says: "This wonderful ten week program gave us the opportunity to spend time with other parents and share our honest thoughts, feelings and experiences in raising a deaf child. It made us see that the struggles we face daily are not limited to our own homes. We learned valuable parenting skills and saw firsthand the full range of technological equipment that is now available for deaf children."

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 - formerly VSDC Services - has been providing information, advocacy, support services and educational resources to enrich the lives of deaf and hearing impaired children and young adults for over 140 years. *Deaf Children Australia* represents the needs of 16,000 deaf and hearing impaired 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.

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