



BLUE



**HOW TO TALK  
TO OPPOSING  
TEAMS ABOUT  
A DEAF OR  
HARD OF  
HEARING CHILD**

**BLUE**  
**PRINT**

Deaf  
Children  
Australia.



**Unlike most physical disabilities, deafness is not visible. If you have a deaf or hard of hearing (DHH) child or young person on your team, the opposition probably won't know that.**

If you're making accommodations for that child, it may look like favouritism. Parents have told us opposing teams sometimes complain that a DHH child is getting special treatment from a coach, referee, or umpire.

To help avoid that situation and encourage an inclusive environment, here are some tips for briefing your opposition.

### **Let them know you have a DHH team member**

Knowing a child on your team is deaf helps your opposition understand why that child might need what looks like special treatment. For example, it can help them understand why you need to speak to that player individually or spend more time with them.

### **Contact the opposing team in advance**

If possible, contact the opposing team's coach or manager before the game or competition. You might like to arrange a short meeting to discuss the best ways to ensure effective communication during the game.

### **Explain any visual signals you'll be using**

Let the opposition know if you will be using any visual signs such as flags or hand gestures to indicate parts of play or directions.

### **Explain any devices you are using**

Listening devices are often used in sports. For example, a coach might wear a microphone around their neck to transmit signals to a child's hearing aid. Let your opposition know about these.

### **Offer simple communication tips**

You might like to offer the opposing team a few simple communication tips. Encourage them to face the DHH child, speak clearly, and use visual cues such as gestures or body language.

### **Share resources**

In our experience, most clubs want to be more inclusive. You might like to let the opposition know about Blueprint or share your resources. You can be part of the movement to help more DHH kids get involved in mainstream activities.

“

I bring EJ up to the net to ask her what's going on if she's not understanding something. I make sure she sees the movements while she's getting an explanation as well.”

EJ's TENNIS COACH



For further information about  
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Deaf Children Australia uses the term 'deaf'  
to refer to all degrees and types of hearing loss.  
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