



**SMOOTH
BEGINNINGS:
10 TIPS FOR
HELPING YOUR
DEAF CHILD JOIN
A NEW CLUB OR
ACTIVITY**

**BLUE
PRINT**

Deaf
Children
Australia.

Starting a new activity is exciting, but it can also be daunting. If your child is deaf or hard of hearing, this can be especially so. We've put together some tips to help make joining a new club or activity as fun, smooth and easy as possible.

Meet the people who'll be working with your child

Try to meet your child's instructor or coach before their first session. Let them know your child is deaf and talk about the support they need. You might like to discuss how to help your child feel included. You could arrange to work with an interpreter during this meeting if that would be helpful. You might also like to meet people like the team manager or admin staff.

Talk about communication and technology

Let your child's coach or instructor know how they prefer to communicate. You could explain some simple ways to improve communication, like making sure they face your child, gain eye contact, and speak clearly at a normal volume. If your child has a radio aid, get the coach to wear it during the activity.

You could also suggest they use visual strategies to aid understanding. For example, they could write instructions on a whiteboard, give demonstrations, and use flags or gestures instead of a whistle.

“

I had a conversation with Amelia's mum about her hearing impairment. She showed me the FM and told me about an appropriate way to talk and the appropriate music volume.”

DEAF DANCER AMELIA'S
DANCE TEACHER

Visit the venue

Arrange to visit the venue before your child's first training or activity session. Check the listening conditions in different parts of the venue, like in the clubroom and on the field. You can also locate important things like the toilets, kiosk, and manager's office.

Talk to your child's teammates

If possible, you might like to organise a time to talk to your child's team members. This can help their teammates understand why your child might need to do things like come forward during briefings or spend extra time with the coach.

If your child is happy to, they could explain their communication needs to their peers. They might like to give some simple tips, such as tapping them on the shoulder to get attention. The whole team could learn some simple signs to use during training and play.

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Advocate for your child

You know your child better than anyone. You are their greatest ally and advocate. Our surveys show clubs are keen to be more inclusive, but they don't always know how to go about it. Don't be afraid to speak up if you feel there are any issues with inclusion or you think of ways they could do things better.

It's also important for your child to learn to advocate for themselves. Encourage your child to tell their coach if they have missed anything during the activity.

"I've always been that mum who's been there for him. I've been his voice at times. My message to other parents of deaf or hard of hearing children is that you need to be out there supporting them. Make them feel a part of their community. Help them to thrive."

DEBBIE, MUM OF
DEAF AFL PLAYER TOM

Protection for listening devices

If your child will be using listening devices during the activity, make sure you have any necessary protective equipment. For example, if your child is doing an activity where a sound processor could get wet, they will need to have a waterproof cover. For contact sports, they might need head gear to protect a device from a direct blow.

Adjust as you go

Things may not go completely smoothly from day one, but that's okay. It can take time (and some creativity!) to figure out what works best for your child. Keep working with coaches and instructors to find ways to improve the listening environment and develop effective communication.

Find a welcoming club

Our surveys show the overwhelming majority of clubs want to be more inclusive and are willing to take steps to support DHH kids in their programs. But if things just do not work out at one club, you can always find another. It may be helpful to find a smaller club, or one where your child has friends who are deaf aware.

"I've tried other groups but this one helped me the most. They were the most accepting and they just made me feel included."

EWEN, DEAF SEA SCOUT

Find role models

If your child is anxious about starting a new activity, it may help to find role models they admire. These could be deaf people or people with normal hearing. You could do an online search for deaf athletes, sportspeople, performing artists, chess players, or people who've had success at whatever your child is taking part in.

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Share Blueprint resources

We've developed a range of resources to help clubs and coaches feel more confident about including DHH children and young people in activities. These include deaf awareness information, myth busters, and advice about caring for listening devices. We've also got practical tips for coaches, admin staff and your child's teammates to help your child feel welcome. Find them here <link or add button to resources for coaches etc>

“As a parent, knowing your child is accepted despite the challenges she has – it warms your heart. Blueprint will enable sporting centres to access information and resources to help them be more deaf aware and inclusive, which will help deaf and hard of hearing kids participate better in sporting activities.”

STACEY, MUM OF DEAF STUDENT GRACE



For further information about Deaf Children Australia.

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