

British Sign Language (BSL) Toolkit for Practitioners



This Toolkit is for practitioners who work with:

- Deaf children, young people and their families
- Parents and carers who use British Sign Language (BSL) and Tactile BSL in education

October 2022



For Scotland's Learners with
Scotland's educators

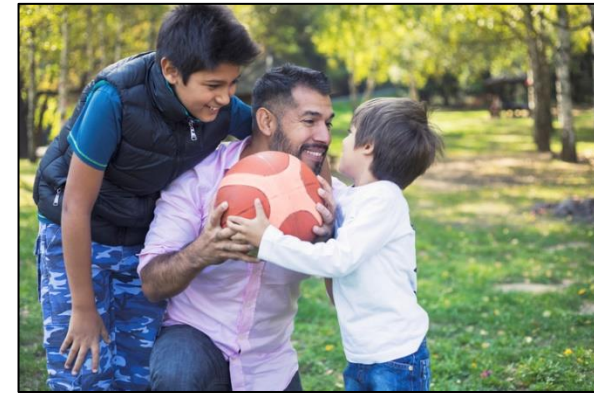
Session 1 - British Sign Language: How schools can work with Deaf parents

29th March 2023 – 3:30-5:00 pm

Practical Points / Event Protocols

- Please mute your microphone when you are not speaking to minimise any echo, feedback or background noise.
- Everyone is invited to share their experiences, thoughts, ideas, resources, questions and worries.
- You can use the chat pane to post comments, questions, thoughts or links to resources.
- If you wish to contribute to the live discussion please type the word 'speak' into the chat pane or use the 'raise your hand' button. The facilitator will bring you into the conversation.
- The event will be recorded.
- If you lose connection, use the same joining instructions to reconnect.
- Today's event will be as relaxed and conversational as possible.
- Lastly – an online discussion is very different to face-to-face and can take time to get used to it!

Overview



- Key national legislation, standards and rights of British Sign Language users in Scotland
- Overview, background and toolkit outline
- British Sign Language, Deaf culture and Deaf identity
- Understanding the barriers
- Working more effectively with deaf signing parents and children
- Key available support in Scotland to support practice

Poll questions

Teams poll

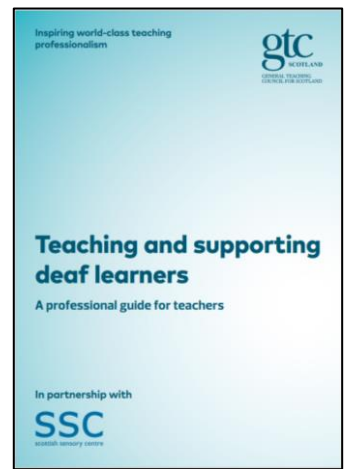
Examples of key national legislation, frameworks, plans and documents

Parental Involvement Act 2006 and Statutory Guidance



- ↗ Learning at Home
- Home/School Partnership
- ↘ Parental Representation

GTCS



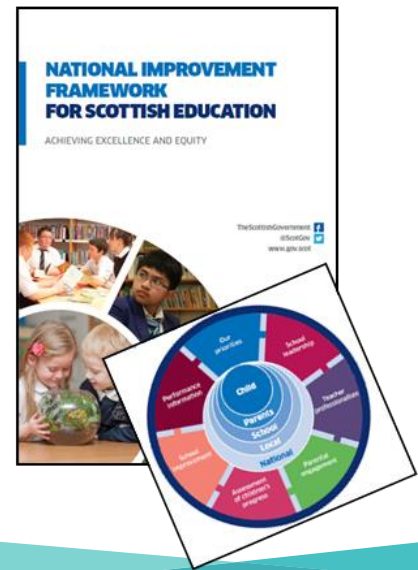
National Plan



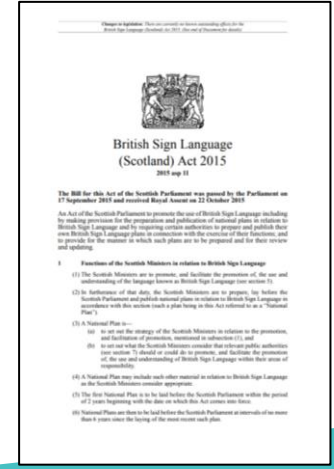
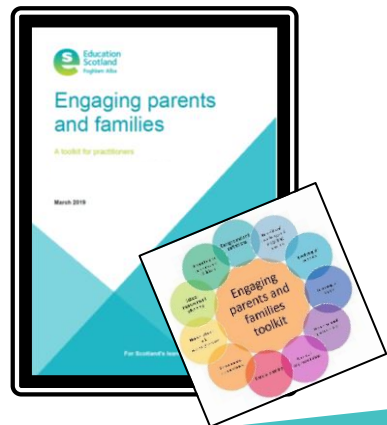
BSL Toolkit



National Improvement Framework



Toolkit



BSL Act

British Sign Language National Plan 2017-23

10 long-term goals for BSL in Scotland

The Scottish Government's British Sign Language Act (2015) and National Plan has several long-term goals for BSL in Scotland which include early years and education. One of these goals is to help parents who use BSL to be fully involved in their child's education.

Family Support, Early Learning and Childcare

Our long-term goal:

The Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach will be fully embedded, with a D/deaf or Deafblind child and their family offered the right information and support at the right time to engage with BSL.



School Education

Our long-term goal:

Children and young people who use BSL will get the support they need at all stages of their learning, so that they can reach their full potential; parents who use BSL will have the same opportunities as other parents to be fully involved in their child's education; and more pupils will be able to learn BSL at school.

By 2020, Scottish Ministers will:

16

Work with the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) to remove barriers that make it difficult for BSL users* to become registered teachers.

17

Undertake additional investigations into the level of BSL held by teachers and support staff working with D/deaf and Deafblind pupils in schools.

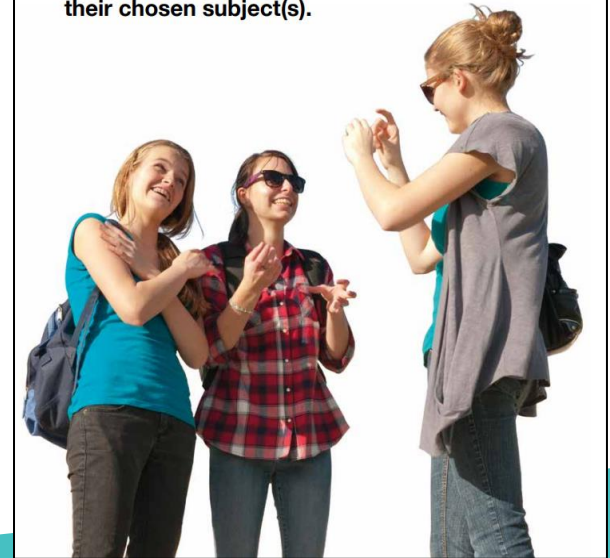


* Wherever we refer to 'BSL users' we mean D/deaf and/or Deafblind people (those who receive the language in a tactile form due to sight loss) whose first or preferred language is British Sign Language.

Post-School Education

Our long-term goal:

BSL users* will be able to maximise their potential at school, will be supported to transition to post-school education if they wish to do so and will receive the support they need to do well in their chosen subject(s).



Local authority British Sign Language Plans

Parentzone
SCOTLAND

My child Learning in Scotland Learning at home Find a school My school Additional support Getting involved News BSL

Parentzone Scotland > BSL > British Sign Language Act and national/local plans

British Sign Language Act and national/local plans

For a signed video of content on this page, please visit our [BSL landing page](#).

The Scottish Government's [British Sign Language \(BSL\) Act \(2015\)](#) and [National Plan](#) has several long-term goals for BSL in Scotland which include early years and education. One of these goals is to help parents who use BSL to be fully involved in their child's education. Further information on the BSL Plan is available on the [Scottish Parliament website](#).

Local Authority British Sign Language Plans

- Aberdeen City Council
- Aberdeenshire Council
- Angus Council
- Argyll and Bute Council
- The City of Edinburgh Council
- Clackmannanshire Council
- Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
- Dumfries and Galloway Council
- Dumfries City Council
- East Ayrshire Council
- East Lothian Council
- Fife Council
- Glasgow City Council
- Highland Council
- Midlothian Council
- Moray Council
- North Ayrshire Council
- North Lanarkshire Council
- Orkney Islands Council
- Perth and Kinross Council
- Renfrewshire Council
- Scottish Borders Council
- South Ayrshire Council
- South Lanarkshire Council
- Stirling Council
- West Dunbartonshire Council

Contact Scotland

- [contactSCOTLAND-BSL](#) is a Scottish Government service that connects Deaf BSL users across Scotland with all of Scotland's local authorities, voluntary organisations and the private sector. The online BSL Interpreting video relay service (VRS) means that Deaf BSL users can contact any service that relies on telephone contact with their service users or customers. It also means that local authorities, voluntary organisations and the private sector can use this easy and flexible way to interact with Deaf BSL users who access their services.

Related links

[Local Authority Plans - BSL Scotland Act 2015](#)

Local Authority Plans - BSL Scotland Act 2015

Scottish Government

Authority Plans

Local Authority Plans

A-D E-H I-L M-P Q-T U-X Contacts

Council Area	Link to BSL version	Link to Plan
Aberdeen City	BSL	Plan Document

<https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/bsl/british-sign-language-act-and-national-local-plans/>

Task – 5 minutes

Have a look at your local authority's British Sign Language Plan

<http://bslscotlandact2015.scot/plans/>

OR

<https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/bsl/british-sign-language-act-and-national-local-plans/>

Research

[Publications – Deaf Education in Scotland and Wales](#)

[Research & Consultations - British Deaf Association \(bda.org.uk\)](#)

[BDA-Scot-Govt-Consultation-paper-review-empotechcommunities-equ-edu-jan-2017.pdf](#)

[BDA Scotland - Education Submission Report-April-2015.pdf](#)

[Response-to-the-Scottish-Government-BDA-Scotlands-response-to-the-consultation-on-the-Draft-BSL-National-Plan-2017-2023-Final.pdf](#)

[BDA-NI-Report-Early-Years-Intervention-for-Deaf-Children-in-Northern-Ireland-2014.pdf](#)

[Audiology-Seminar-Report-2019.pdf \(bda.org.uk\)](#)

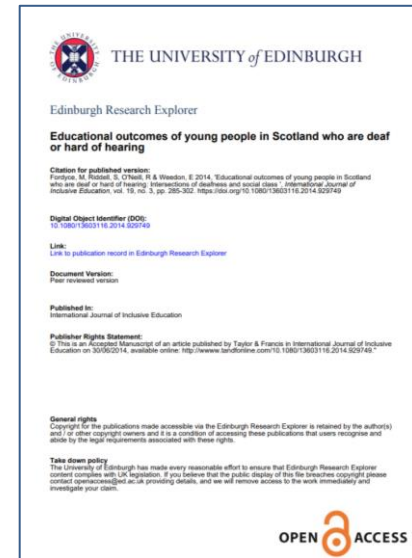


Educational Outcomes of Young People in Scotland who are Deaf or hard of hearing

Key findings from research published in 2014 showed that young people who are deaf or hard of hearing:

- have lower educational attainment than their hearing peers
- are less likely to progress into higher education after leaving school
- are more likely to enter further education as a post-school destination – a minority participate in training programmes, moving into employment or become unemployed
- from less advantaged social backgrounds had much more difficult post-school experiences
- can lack parental and school support
- can feel socially isolated and unsupported through post-school transition process

<https://www.research.ed.ac.uk/en/publications/educational-outcomes-of-young-people-in-scotland-who-are-deaf-or->



Rights of Deaf children and young people



- [UNCRC](#)
- Scottish Qualification Authority [qualifications](#) in BSL for pupils
- Deaf BSL users in Scotland can use BSL for [exams](#)
- Rights of children aged 12-15 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1GJFMnprY8>
- Extra support in exams - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eX3RkPb-eVU>
- BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 promotes that information and services will be accessible to BSL users across the Scottish public sector
- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (UNCRPD) recognises and promotes the use of sign language to allow persons to 'seek, receive and impart information and ideas on an equal basis with others and through all forms of communication of their choice' (Article 21)

Overview of BSL in Scotland

Deaf children in UK / Scotland



1 in 600 Deaf babies born in the UK every year

96% of Deaf children are born to hearing parents - vast majority do not have BSL skills

3,647 an increase of 8% - 30 services responded across 32 LAs
2018/19

2,898 27 services responded across 32 LAs
2019/20

2,841 25 services responded across 32 LAs
2020/21

Schools and Resource Bases



3 Schools for the Deaf

4 Primary Schools with Deaf units

9 Secondary Schools with Deaf Units

13 resource bases

Audiences



Deaf C&YP with Deaf parents

Hearing C&YP with Deaf parents

Deaf C&YP with hearing parents



Examples of Stakeholders



BSL Users - Deaf and/or Deafblind pupils

Parents, foster carers, corporate parents, adoptive parents, refugees, gypsy travellers

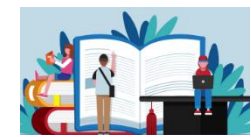
Headteachers, Depute HTs, Principal Teachers

Teacher(s) of Deaf

Community

BSL/English interpreters

Complexities



Understanding BSL, Deaf culture and Deaf identity

Workforce development

Access to Deaf role models

Mental health and wellbeing

Extra-curricular activities

Friendships

Accessing information in BSL format, resources

Large group of hearing parents of a Deaf child who want to learn BSL

Background

The 2018/19 and 2020/21 CRIDE Annual Surveys show the following key findings for school-aged Deaf children in Scotland.

	% 2018/19	% 2020/21
Attending a mainstream school	86	81
Attended a mainstream school with resource provisions	5	5
Attended a special school for deaf children	1	2
Home educated		6
Attended a special school which was not specifically for Deaf children	6	6
Deaf children recorded as having an additional support need	22	20
Deaf children using an additional spoken language other than English	7	8

Partnership Working

Toolkit shaped by feedback from:

- Focus groups and interviews with Deaf and hearing parents, carers, Teachers of deaf children, Headteachers of Deaf schools/units, Deaf teachers, BSL Teachers and an online survey with parents who use British Sign Language.

Consultation on the Toolkit has been undertaken with:

- Deaf professionals, a number of Education professionals, Scottish Government, The University of Edinburgh and the British Deaf Association Scotland.



Audience and Aims of Toolkit



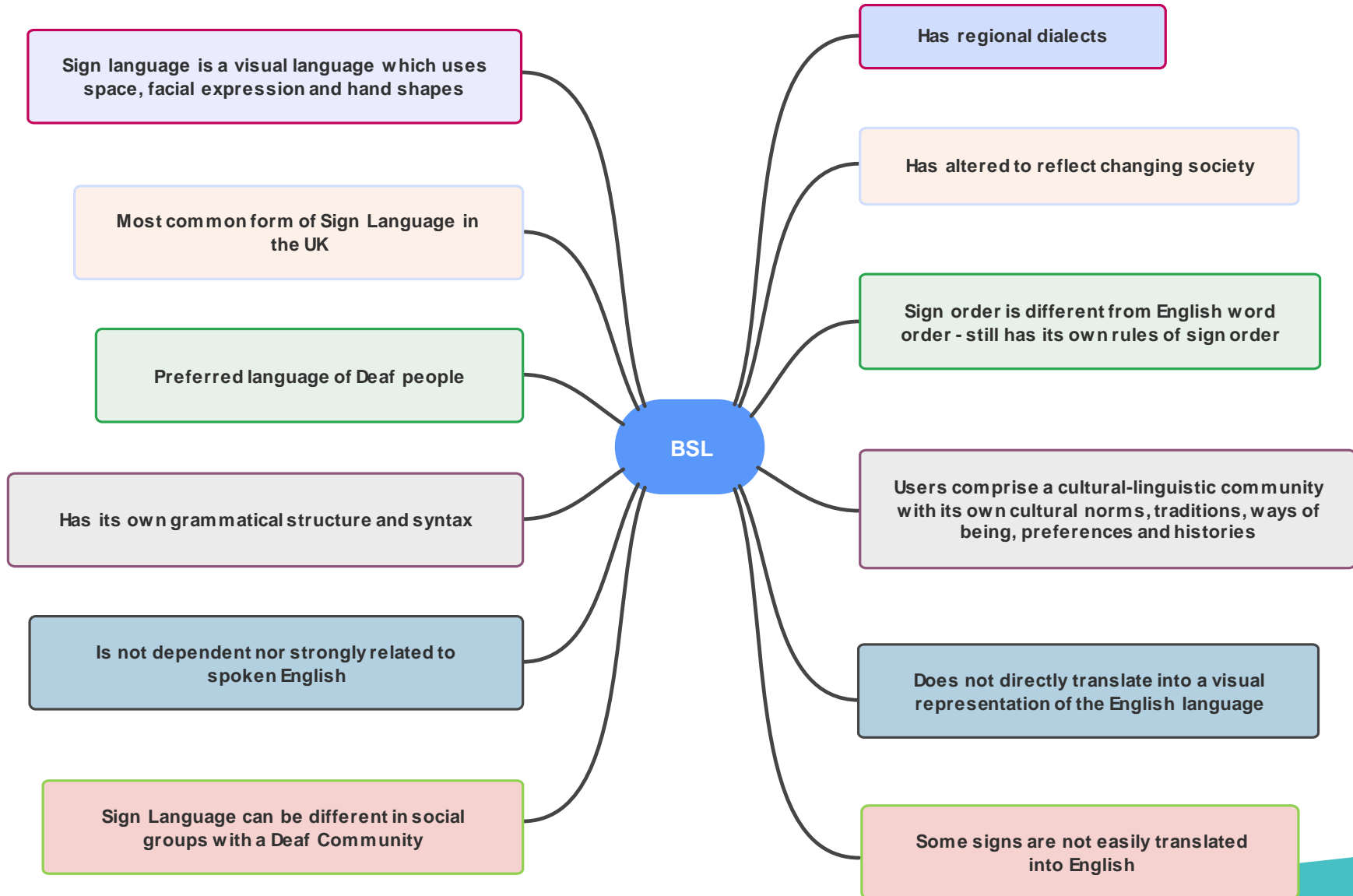
Audience

- The Toolkit is aimed at practitioners within early learning and childcare settings and schools who support all Deaf children, young people and their families, parents and carers who use British Sign Language and Tactile BSL, or who may consider using it, in education

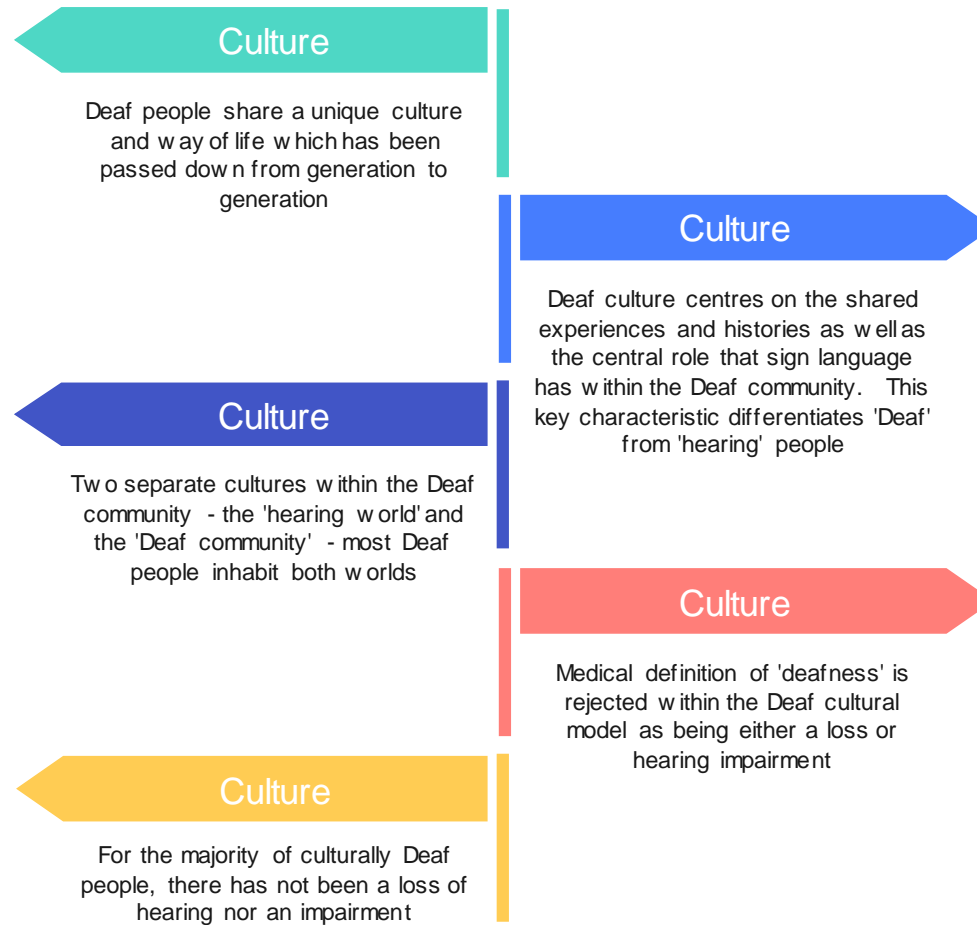
Aims

- Outline barriers that BSL users may encounter when trying to engage with education
- Provides suggested ideas and reflective questions for consideration on what might help address and overcome these
- List of key national organisations who may be able to help

British Sign Language (BSL)



Deaf culture and Deaf identity



Engaging Deaf/hearing BSL Families - comparisons

Deaf parents	Hearing parents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More likely to be fluent in BSL • Able to communicate with own Deaf child • Able to teach own child BSL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not know or be fluent in BSL • Unable to communicate with own Deaf child • Unable to teach own child BSL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English is second language • Ability to understand English language varies and will be dependent on the individual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English is usually the first language • Less opportunities to learn and develop skills – costs involved
<p>Learning to read and/or write or learn any new language can be complex</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less opportunities to access information unless available in BSL or able to read English 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to access information and seek help/support
<p>Many young BSL users become more fluent earlier than the adults who support them</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For some Deaf parents, the progress of their Deaf child's learning was significantly behind that of their hearing child 	

Barriers to learning

- What barriers do you feel Deaf parents and families may face when trying to engage with their child's learning? (5 minutes)

Jamboard:

https://jamboard.google.com/d/1LDtpXxST_mZLDVN9q-sWo5mpO0e-ST5O9NycvIEjBTE/edit?usp=sharing

Barriers to learning

All children and young people can face barriers to their learning for a variety of different reasons

Deaf children who use BSL could encounter similar barriers but also experience completely different and/or additional barriers to their learning e.g.

- Communication needs are often not being met effectively
- Do not have language in the earliest years
- Many Deaf children from signing families need a BSL environment and access to staff who can use the language fluently

Deaf children are 60% more likely to experience mental health problems compared to other children

Deaf children generally have more friends in lower stages of primary but fewer in upper stages and secondary

Working more effectively with Deaf signing parents and children

- Range of practitioners and partners who will be able to work in partnership with settings and schools to support BSL users and carers
- Range of national organisations who can help support practitioners working with BSL users
- Communication is key to ensure effective engagement with BSL users
- Practitioners working with BSL families should consider whether they are:
 - A Deaf/Deafblind parent of Deaf/Deafblind children
 - A Deaf/Deafblind parent of hearing children
 - A hearing parent of Deaf/Deafblind children



Working more effectively (Cont.)

- Many Deaf parents may lack confidence with English for a number of reasons including:
 - not receiving early support when they themselves were in the 0-5 age group
 - their parents (if Deaf) not having communication with Teachers of Deaf children
 - teaching methods in settings and schools may not have used BSL
 - Teachers of Deaf children may previously only have had minimal BSL skills
- A lack of or limited literacy skills amongst many Deaf parents means they have less access to information about how systems like Education work

Working more effectively (Cont.)



- BSL users who read and write English, may have partners at home who do not
- Individuals all have their own preferred method(s) of receiving information and this will be dependent on their needs and circumstances
- Ask BSL families what their specific communication needs and preferences are
- Ensuring workforce is developed and equipped to work with BSL users is an ongoing challenge
- Access to Deaf role models

Case Studies

Engaging parents in language learning

Moorfoot Primary School and Garvel Deaf Centre -

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/practice-exemplars/engaging-parents-in-language-learning-moorfoot-primary-school-and-garvel-deaf-centre-inverclyde-council/>



Good practice in working with deaf learners, their parents and families

St Roch's Secondary School & St Thomas' Primary School -

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/good-practice-in-working-with-deaf-learners-their-parents-and-families-bsl-plan/>

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Home > Parentzone Scotland

Parentzone Scotland

Parentzone Scotland provides information and advice about education in Scotland. It includes practical ideas to support learning at home in a variety of curriculum areas, along with information on additional support needs, and tips on how parents can get involved in their child's school and education.

BSL

Access British Sign Language (BSL) translations for key information and advice to help parents support their children's learning including.

My child

Find out what your child is entitled to in terms of learning and support as they progress through their education.

Curriculum in Scotland

This section provides a simple introduction to Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence, including information on the Broad General Education and the Senior Phase.

Learning at home

A positive home learning environment makes a big difference to children's learning.

My school

Find information on some of the different options available when choosing a school for your child.

Additional support

Find out about specific support needs and what you can do to support your child.

Getting involved

As a parent or carer you can make an enormous difference to your child's chances of success in school, at home and in their later life.

News

Find useful news for parents and carers.

Information to support learning



Parentzone
SCOTLAND



Opportunity for Questions

Discussion

Poll questions

Teams poll

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