



First Voice Strategic Plan 2019-2021

Our Purpose

In the 21st century, children who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH) have the opportunity to hear, listen and speak as effectively as their naturally hearing peers.

Through the combination of early diagnosis, innovative and state-of-the-art hearing technology and world-leading auditory-verbal therapy programs, children who are DHH are no longer limited by their hearing loss but in fact are achieving listening and spoken language skills necessary to participate in mainstream education, employment of choice and social integration within the hearing world.

Our Goal

Our goal is to ensure optimal speech outcomes for all children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Our Mission

Our Mission is to:

- raise awareness of early childhood deafness and the urgency of early intervention for children who are DHH
- promote universal newborn hearing screening and the implementation of adequately funded and timely management pathways
- pursue domestic / international fundraising opportunities for listening and spoken language services and related research
- advocate for equitable and timely access to evidence-based early intervention services and mainstream inclusion for children who are DHH.

We believe that all children who are DHH have access to the hearing technology and specialist early intervention services that will enable them to achieve the best possible speech, language, education and social outcomes.

Our Approach

First Voice pursues these ends through advocacy, research, information sharing, collaboration, and continuous improvement of services and programs. We measure our outcomes across a number of domains to lead best practice in service delivery.

Our Strategic Imperatives

1. Advocacy

First Voice will seek to shape the community's perception of deafness and the effectiveness of services available for families. We will advocate for integrated government and non-government systems, processes and services for children who are DHH, including but not limited to:

- access to effective listening and spoken language early intervention services for all children who are DHH, regardless of location, or economic or social status;
- sustainable funding for evidence-based services;
- effective early intervention pathways;
- guided support for newly diagnosed children and their families; and
- initiatives that address the social, emotional, psychological wellbeing of all children with a hearing loss.

2. Research

First Voice will provide the evidence base that supports all we do and the way we seek to shape the system for children and their families. We will lead research collaborations that explore the complex issues that children with hearing loss face to help inform and create the world's best practice.

3. Clinical Practice

First Voice will continue to invest in clinical approaches that provide children who are DHH with the best possible speech, developmental and learning outcomes. Our members will use an outcomes framework to continually improve the work we do, while providing part of the evidence base for an auditory-verbal approach. We will publish data that illustrates our members' outcomes and how our shared approach leads the world's practice in supporting children who are DHH.

4. Sustainability

First Voice will engage in partnerships to drive the sustainability of the system, our members and for the families we support. We lead initiatives to further develop the financial, human and technological capabilities within the sector to drive outcomes for families and for the communities in which our members operate.

Our Members

Hear and Say

Taralye (an RIDBC Service)

Telethon Speech & Hearing

The Shepherd Centre

Can:Do 4Kids, Townsend House

Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children (RIDBC)

The Hearing House, *New Zealand*

Auditory Verbal UK, *United Kingdom*

The Carel du Toit Centre, *South Africa*

