

## About The Shepherd Centre

### Quick facts

- The Shepherd Centre provides an Early Intervention program teaching children who are deaf and hearing impaired to listen and speak using their residual hearing with the use of an appropriate listening device such as hearing aids and cochlear implants
- The family-centre approach ensures that parents or caregivers are given the necessary skills to work with their children in developing spoken language
- The Shepherd Centre program is for infants and pre-school aged children with the aim of enabling them to attend their local primary school with their hearing peers and reach their full potential in the hearing world
- For some of the families attending The Shepherd Centre, deafness may be one of several special needs for their child. Our teaching staff has a diverse range of specialist skills and is able to confidently work with families to help each child reach their full potential
- We provide our Early Intervention Services at no charge to the families. We rely on the vital support and generosity of the community to continue our work
- We have farewelled over 1000 families after they graduated from our Early Intervention Program and moved on to mainstream schooling
- There are currently over 180 families who access our services in our five centre's across NSW and ACT, and our Correspondence Program
- We have an international reputation as a centre for excellence and this is reflected in the diversity of families enrolled in our correspondence program, both Australia-wide and internationally
- In the last decade, enrolments in our programs have more than doubled



***The Shepherd  
Centre service  
180 families a  
year across an  
Early  
Intervention  
and Cochlear  
Implant  
program all at  
no charge to  
families***

## **History of The Shepherd Centre**

The story of The Shepherd Centre has its beginnings in 1970. It was a dream realised for Dr Bruce Shepherd and his late wife Annette. Both of their children were born profoundly deaf and at that time there was no suitable program in Australia for teaching deaf children to speak.

The Shepherds believed that given the opportunity and with training, children who are born deaf or hearing impaired should be able to take their place in the hearing world.

After a long and intensive search, the John Tracy Clinic in Los Angeles was used as the model for teaching. The Shepherds believed this method best encompassed the educational and family ethos they wished to emulate.

With just five families, The Council for Integrated Deaf Education was established, later becoming The Shepherd Centre for Deaf Children and their Parents.

## **Our Vision**

To enable children who are deaf and hearing-impaired to develop spoken language so they may fully participate in the hearing world and in so doing reach their full potential.

## **Our Mission**

To assist children who are deaf and hearing-impaired achieve spoken communication within the family, the educational setting and within the wider community by involving parents and the community in the education and development of the child.

To develop the skills of the parents and carers, by providing an intensive infant and preschool program, so that children may acquire speech and language, principally using their residual hearing with the use of appropriate listening devices (e.g. hearing aids or cochlear implants).

To develop language, listening, speech and social skills to facilitate integration of the child with their hearing peers at the earliest possible opportunity and ensure integration continues throughout life.



## **Our Philosophy**

To assist children who are deaf or hearing-impaired use their residual hearing to learn the skills they need to acquire speech and language and to enable them to live comfortably in the wider community.

These skills will enable the adult who is deaf or hearing impaired to have choices in lifestyle, occupation and mode of communication.

Intensive early intervention, focusing on listening and speaking, is designed to meet this aim.

The Shepherd Centre provides services which enable families to gain the knowledge, understanding and confidence needed as the primary decision-makers, caregivers and teachers of their own children.

Assistance and knowledge will be offered so that parents may make appropriate decisions and choices about amplification and hearing devices for their children.

The Shepherd Centre, mindful of the special needs of the families of children who are deaf and hearing-impaired, offers guidance and support both on an individual and family basis as well as in group settings.

The Shepherd Centre program, structured around typical child development sequences, is based on family involvement and parent and professional teamwork.



***93% of The  
Shepherd  
Centre children  
go onto  
mainstream  
school***

## **Did you know?**

- Approximately 1 in 300 children are born with a hearing impairment, this increases to 1 in 250 by the time a child reaches school age. This increase is due to illness or accidents.
- Research has demonstrated that emotional adjustment, social development and academic achievements are significantly enhanced for children attending mainstream education compared with children attending special schooling.
- It costs the community around \$400,000 during a hearing impaired person's lifetime if they are not integrated into mainstream schooling and taught to communicate in the hearing world.
- It costs over \$12,000 per year for a child in The Shepherd Centre program. The Shepherd Centre provide their Early Intervention Program totally free of charge
- Over 90% of hearing impaired infants are born to hearing parents. Most wish for their child to develop fluent spoken communication, attend a regular school and participate fully as an active member of society.
- Each year the vast majority of our students graduate to mainstream schooling – however our aim is to teach every child to reach their own personal potential to the best of their ability.

## **Final say.....**

Imagine living in a world of silence where you will never hear the birds singing in the morning or hear your mother calling your name. Well this is reality for so many children around Australia but with your support we can break this world of silence.