

# Ask the expert

Each issue, a professional shares their expert advice and gives information to help you support your child. This time, Rebecca, a nursery worker at an academy with fully integrated enhanced provision for deaf children, shares her thoughts.

## What can parents expect from you when you're working with their child?

Parents can expect a good level of communication from any member of staff working with their child. They should also expect personalised provision and access to a Teacher of the Deaf (ToD). At Reigate Park Academy, we believe all parents should have a good understanding of the importance of encouraging communication and developing language skills with their child.

## What different methods do you use to communicate with deaf children at the nursery?

We use a mixture. Our ToDs are all qualified to at least British Sign Language (BSL) Level 3, we work very closely with an NHS speech and language therapist and a number of implant centres. We also have regular contact with audiology services. We're currently working alongside the National Deaf Children's Society and Signature to develop a whole-school BSL curriculum which will be taught to all pupils, both hearing and deaf, from nursery.

## What are the biggest benefits for a deaf child going to your nursery?

The biggest benefit of going to nursery from an early age is that they're supported to develop their BSL and/or spoken language skills. It also helps to develop a child's social skills, as well as giving children access to deaf peers and deaf adult role models.

## What are some of the biggest challenges deaf children face at nursery?

One of the biggest challenges for some deaf children is the time between joining nursery and developing their communication skills to a level which enables them to communicate effectively with their peers. We overcome any communication challenges through our BSL teaching, speech and language therapy and good communication with parents.

## What advice would you give to parents currently looking for an early years setting for their child?

Parents should initially look at the nursery's website; it should have a section on special educational needs. This will help parents to make an informed decision. Parents should then contact the nursery to arrange a visit or virtual discussion. They should ask them a range of questions about what provision will be provided for their child.



For more information about choosing the right childcare for your child, visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/childcare](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/childcare).



**Rebecca,  
nursery  
worker**

## What are your favourite and most challenging parts of your job?

We pride ourselves on working hard to overcome the challenge of children who enter school without any language. We focus on developing a child's skills to support their life-long learning, and the best way we can do this is by supporting our children to learn as many modes of communication as possible – this is the favourite part of my role. I also really enjoy encouraging parents to take an active role in their child's learning journey.



**Parents should ask a nursery about what provision will be provided for their child.**