



Every family is different and will experience different things, in different ways, at different times. Some of the information in this resource will be useful to you now, and some may be more useful when your child is older.

# about this kit

## THE PURPOSE OF THE KIT

*Possibilities and Pathways* has been designed as a guide for families whose child has been identified with a hearing loss. It aims to:

- help you explore what your child's hearing loss might mean for your family and your child
- provide information to support your decision-making
- give you some practical tips that might assist you on your way, and
- link you to a range of support services and other useful sources of information.

Every family is different and will experience different things, in different ways, at different times. Some of the information in this resource will be useful to you now, and some may be more useful when your child is older. Keep this book handy and use it at your own pace as the different chapters become relevant to you. You may choose to look through *Possibilities* alone, with your family and friends, or with a professional such as your Hearing Loss Family Support Facilitator (see page 4).

Because the kit is about you and your family, it's been designed so it can be personalised. A space has been provided on the front cover so that you can insert a photo of your child in the slot inside, while a sheet of sticker letters has been included so that you can paste your child's name into the title.

You will also receive a book from Australian Hearing called *Choices*. Australian Hearing is the Commonwealth Government agency that provides services such as hearing assessment, hearing aids, and other listening devices. The *Choices* book is a particularly useful resource for parents in the first six months after diagnosis as it contains information to help you understand hearing loss. If you keep both *Choices* and *Possibilities* together in this kit, as well as any other brochures, reports and information you receive along the way, you will build up a very useful reference package. Best of all, the package will be targeted specifically for you and your child.

## WHAT'S IN THE KIT

The *Possibilities* kit contains:

- The *Possibilities* book
- A sheet of sticker letters so you can personalise the resource
- A notepad of 'Our questions' to record questions you may wish to ask professionals and support services
- Two copies of an information sheet for your child's grandparents called 'When your grandchild is diagnosed with a hearing loss'

- Four copies of an information sheet for your friends called 'When your friend's baby is diagnosed with a hearing loss'
- A checklist to help you consider some of the important issues in choosing an early intervention service for your child
- A document wallet for storing your child's reports, letters from professionals, and other information
- Additional space for storing other important resources such as:
  - *Choices* – from Australian Hearing
  - Your child's *Personal Health Record* (their 'red book' provided by the hospital at birth), and
  - Your child's record of medical assessments.

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Although *Possibilities* can be read from cover-to-cover, it doesn't need to be read in this way. It has been written so you can dip in and out of the different sections and find the information that is important for you at any particular time.

For example, when you're looking for guidance on what to do next, Section 1 on *Understanding your child's hearing loss* will help; when you're trying to come to terms with your feelings or balancing the family's needs, Section 2 may be useful; and when you're simply trying to locate some contact details or check the meaning of a technical term, Section 3 will provide a quick reference.

Throughout *Possibilities* are boxes with tips from other parents of children who have a hearing loss. You will also find 'Questions to think about.' These might help you to reflect on your own experiences, examine how what you have read and heard relates to your own situation, and prompt you to jot down your questions on the 'Our questions' notepad provided in the kit. You can then discuss these issues with a doctor or other service at a later date.

A note on terminology: in *Possibilities* the terms 'deaf' and 'hearing loss' are used interchangeably to refer to any level of hearing loss. You might choose to use different words, and you might notice other families and professionals using words such as 'hearing impairment' or 'hard-of-hearing.'

We hope *Possibilities* makes a valuable contribution to your family's journey and encourages you to discover many other sources of information and support to help you build a happy future with your child.

# Queensland Hearing Loss Family Support Service

One of the many services available to your family is the Queensland Hearing Loss Family Support Service (QHLFSS). This service supports families all over Queensland who have children with a hearing loss. It is available to your family until your child finishes Year 1.

The service comprises a team of Hearing Loss Family Support Facilitators (sometimes referred to as FSFs). The FSFs are all trained as social workers, counsellors or psychologists and have further training in issues related to childhood hearing loss.

Families can use the FSFs in different ways at different times for help in:

- finding information about concerns as diverse as early intervention services, medical appointments, financial support, transport to appointments.
- negotiating the maze of professionals and services, such as which doctor to consult on a particular question, or which services have particular skills and resources.
- attending appointments.
- liaising with the other services your child uses to develop short, medium and long term goals and strategies.

FSFs will also listen when you just want to talk to someone outside your immediate friends and family. They will do this by telephone or video-teleconference, or in person through home visits or visits to a centre.

You may already have been in contact with someone from the QHLFSS, but it is entirely your choice whether you continue to use this service. However, if you haven't yet had contact with the QHLFSS and would like to speak with an FSF, simply call the freecall number below. You don't need a referral.



Queensland Hearing Loss  
Family Support Service  
Phone : 1800 352 075  
Monday - Friday  
8:30am - 5:00pm

