



The Shepherd Centre

Giving deaf children a voice



EMPOWER VOICE. AMPLIFY POSSIBILITY.

Welcome to The Shepherd Centre



**We empower generations of deaf children
to listen, speak and have a voice.**

The Shepherd Centre is a not-for-profit, specialist provider dedicated to supporting children and young people with all types of hearing loss. We work closely with your family to achieve the unique goals you have for your child, helping them reach their full potential.

Our service is funded by the NDIS, Government funding and generous philanthropic donations which enables families to access care without paying fees*.



*Eligibility criteria applies.

The Shepherd Centre

TSC children have a bright future

Children with hearing loss can thrive and reach their potential with the right support. They can absolutely achieve their dreams and fully participate in a hearing world.

We're family-centred

We partner with families to support you fully; educating, equipping, encouraging and empowering you, at every step, to flourish.

Our wraparound care has incredible outcomes

Our exceptional outcomes reflect our commitment to keep delivering the best possible results for children with hearing loss.

We're recognised as innovative world leaders

We're experts at the forefront of research. We embrace new evidence and bring it into our sessions so children can benefit from fresh approaches in real time.

We're where you need us most

Our services are all available in one place – whether it's at one of our many centres, and/or directly into your home or school via video link.

We tailor our support

Every child and family is unique. We work with you to achieve your goals and because we closely monitor progress, we can tailor as we go.

We're one big family

We welcome you and your family into The Shepherd Centre community. Together, we support and embrace people from all backgrounds and cultures.

We're better together

Despite NDIS funding, there is a gap in covering the full costs of specialist care for deaf children. To bridge this gap we depend on our community's generosity to ensure every child can learn to listen and speak.

Trusted care with proven results

The Shepherd Centre was the first to provide wraparound services in Australia and remains one of the largest in Australia today. Our evidence-based approach and multidisciplinary team ensures each child receives the highest quality of care. **We are world leaders in early intervention for deaf children.**

We support 100% of our graduates to attend mainstream primary schools, proving the effectiveness of our program. We focus on empowering the entire family, providing guidance, education and support throughout your journey.

Empowering Voice, Amplifying Possibility.

We empower children with hearing loss to listen, speak, and thrive through our evidence-based wraparound care model.

Our wraparound care is the recommended standard within paediatric programs to provide children with the listening and spoken language skills needed to achieve mainstream education, employment of choice and social integration within the hearing world.

Our evidence-based wraparound care works.

Our wraparound care model is more than just a program. It's a proven, holistic approach integrating early intervention specialists in audiology, speech therapy and family support, backed by decades of research.

This model ensures all aspects of your child's development are addressed, supporting not just their ability to listen and speak, but overall growth and well-being.

Value for your NDIS plan. All under one roof.

We maximise your plan's value by offering a multidisciplinary approach addressing all aspects of your child's development. This goes beyond what single discipline providers can offer, with proven success.

This integrated care model requires more resources creating a funding gap not fully covered by the NDIS. Our team of experts work together to provide the most comprehensive care possible, ensuring the best outcomes for your child.

Bridging the funding gap.

NDIS funds just 40% of the total cost of delivering our wraparound care service.

This means there is a funding gap for each hour of therapy. Fundraising ensures families can access care without paying fees.

Grants, bequests and donations bridge this gap, ensuring every child receives the care they need to thrive.



The Shepherd Centre



Our family charter

We are dedicated to helping every deaf child reach their full potential through excellent listening and spoken language development. This commitment shapes our approach every day. We ask all TSC staff and the families we support, to uphold our Family Charter.



Our philosophy

At The Shepherd Centre, we recognise that your family is your child's first and most influential teacher. We value and respect your opinions, and we are committed to building a strong relationship with you to connect home and our centre seamlessly.

Our partnership aims to identify and achieve meaningful goals for your child's development, respecting your family's unique culture, traditions, and beliefs.

Our commitment to you

We are dedicated to:

- Empowering and supporting you in making decisions for your child's life.
- Supporting your chosen level of involvement in the community and with our organisation.
- Fostering a culture that upholds your family's legal and human rights
- Providing high-quality expertise and services to help your child achieve their best spoken language.
- Ensuring the safety and privacy of your child and family in all interactions with us.
- Treating you and your child with empathy, respect and courtesy, and addressing any questions or concerns you have.

We promise to:

- Inform you about the choices available to you.
- Maintain records of your family's preferences regarding services.
- Involve you in decisions affecting you and the services you receive, supporting your informed choices.
- Encourage and support your involvement in service development, evaluation, planning and management.
- Seek your input on participation strategies, assistance, support and service development.
- Develop connections with other groups to enhance community participation opportunities.

Our shared commitment

We pledge to treat each other with empathy, respect and courtesy.

We will be considerate towards each other, other families, volunteers and staff.

We will keep each other informed of any changes or concerns that could impact your child's care and development.

Together, we will create a supportive and respectful environment for everyone.

Meet your team

Our collaborative team includes Listening and Spoken Language Therapists, Child and Family Counsellors, Audiologists and Early Education Specialists with specialised paediatric experience, and if required, Ear Nose and Throat Specialists. Every member of The Shepherd Centre team shares a common ethos that families come first. We're all passionate about doing the very best we can for every family we have the privilege of supporting.



Listening and Spoken Language Specialists/Therapists (LSLS)

Our Listening and Spoken Language Specialists & Therapists (LSLS) work with deaf children to develop their listening and spoken language skills. They use specialised techniques and strategies to help children learn to listen and speak, tailoring their approach to each child's unique needs. Speech Pathologists and Listening and Spoken Language Specialists/Therapists play a crucial role in our wraparound care model, ensuring children reach their full communication potential.

Child and Family Counsellors (CFC)

Our Child and Family Counsellors provide emotional and practical support to families navigating the challenges of raising a deaf child. They offer counselling, guidance on managing stress and expectations and resources to help families adapt and thrive. The CFC plays a vital role in supporting the entire family, ensuring that they have the tools and support needed throughout their journey.

Audiologists (AUD)

Audiologists support the assessment and management of your child's hearing health. They can conduct hearing tests, evaluate devices, review access to sound and program implantable hearing devices (such as Cochlear, Baha or Osia devices). Audiologists monitor your child's hearing over time, working closely with specialists (like Hearing Australia) to ensure your child receives comprehensive, tailored care.

The Shepherd Centre's world leading wraparound care team gives parents the skills and confidence to help their children enter their local primary school of choice with speech and listening abilities on par with, and sometimes above, their hearing peers.

Your care program

1

Welcome to The Shepherd Centre

Individual sessions

Meet the team

- Initial meeting/s to get to know you
- Family Support Team to assist with NDIS application

Parent and child group sessions

Talk Together Listening Foundations

- Our 8 week introductory parent education program
- Available in person or online
- Led by your wraparound care team: Listening and Spoken Language Therapists, Paediatric Audiologists, Child & Family Counsellors and Early Educators.

2

Early Intervention - Your First Years

(diagnosis to Kindergarten)

Individual sessions

- Learn & Listen:** Tailored mix of sessions to support your child including regular, functional check ins.
- Listening support package:** Supplementary service for families / local provider

Parent and child group sessions

Kidscape - Specialist playgroup and parent education

- Confident Kids (1-2 years old): Social skills group program
- Acoustic Skills: Music education for children
- Empower Me: Supporting carers and extended families
- Circle of Security: Developing secure relationships between parent and child
- Tuning into kids: Teaching children to manage emotions
- Music matters: Music education for parents

Inclusive preschools

A caring preschool environment for children with or without hearing loss. Available in Wollongong and Liverpool

3

Transition to Primary School

(Leading up to child heading to kindergarten)

Individual sessions

- Listen for literacy:** Building your child's reading, spelling and writing skills

Parent and child group sessions

Kidscape - Specialist playgroup and parent education

- Confident Kids (4-5 years old): Social skills group program
- Ready Steady Think: Develop executive functioning skills
- Off to school: Preparation group for children

Please note that each family's experience at The Shepherd Centre is unique. As such, the programs, activities, or meetings listed above may differ from what you experience. You might encounter them in a different order or with varying frequency based on your individual needs and circumstances.

Your care program

4

Primary School

Individual sessions for parent and/or child

- Counselling and support
- Assessments
- Speech pathology
- School visits / teacher support: supporting your child in their school environment

Parent and child group sessions

- Confident Kids (6-8 years old): Social skills group program
- Confident Kids (9-11 years old): Social skills group program
- Speech cognition and literacy programs: Small groups

HearHub

Innovate. Inform. Inspire.



Learning and innovation support for your child's teachers via HearHub

5

High School and Beyond

Hear For You

For 9 - 16 year olds: A support community of young deaf adults, providing guidance and encouragement to help them reach their full potential. (NDIS funded)

Become a mentor (coaching)

For 16+ year olds: This mentorship program connects older children / young adults with younger deaf children, creating a powerful exchange of support and inspiration. This program not only allows mentors to build leadership skills and confidence, but also offers mentees a relatable role model who understands their journey. Together, they share experiences, form friendships, and develop resilience, making it a rewarding experience for both.

6

Alumni Community

Beyond Sound (alumni)

For young adults: The Shepherd Centre's alumni program offers a unique opportunity to stay connected, share experiences and give back. As alumni, you can participate in interactive workshops, engage with inspiring guest speakers and take part in team-building activities that are genuinely enjoyable. By sharing your journey and insights, you can play a key role in supporting younger children, offering them relatable experiences and mentorship. Plus, it's a great way to make new friends and stay involved in a community that understands and supports you.

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Your care explained

What is involved in your sessions?

Your sessions at The Shepherd Centre are individually tailored and involve a lot of work before, during and after your time with us.

Every session is a result of thorough preparation, consultation with other clinical disciplines and methodical follow up.

We use a holistic, multi-disciplinary approach with the goal of assisting your child to achieve their full potential in the hearing world.



Before

Preparation

Each appointment is tailored to your child and family's unique needs. Our staff dedicate time to prepare for each session. To make the most of our time together, before each session we:

- Review your individual goals and progress notes
- Discuss any concerns with other members of your dedicated team (e.g. audiologist, child & family counsellor)
- Prepare your personalised session including activities in listening, spoken language, thinking skills and social / emotional development
- Gather resources and set up the session.

During

Learning

During each session, it is all about your child and your family.

Together we:

- Focus on key goals through engaging, age-appropriate and fun activities
- Track progress since the last session
- Review achievements in your long-term goals
- Occasionally invite other team members to join the session as needed, such as your audiologist or a child and family counsellor
- End with joint goal setting and identify areas for home practice
- Schedule your next appointment.

After

Follow Up

This stage is as crucial as the others. It helps track progress and manage all support areas, ensuring we're prepared for future visits. We also ensure everything aligns with your Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) and NDIS plan.

At this stage we:

- Use diagnostic tools to plot and record your child's progress
- Attend to any letters, reports or other documentation
- Continuously evaluate progress and ensure family goals in the IFSP are on track
- Provide holistic support by staying in regular contact with your child's health and education providers, such as Hearing Australia, your GP, and teachers.

Behind the scenes (indirect): our clinical team sometimes needs to meet to discuss your child's progress and plan the best way forward. This ensures we're fully prepared to support your child's unique journey during their next session.



The Shepherd Centre



Our delivery model

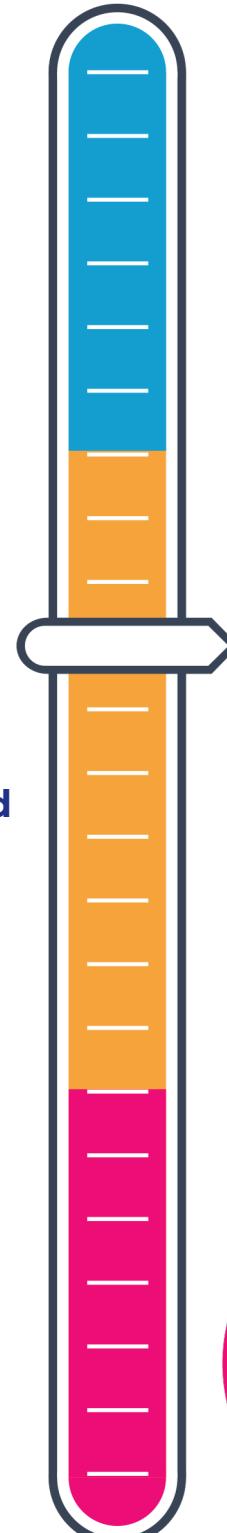
The Shepherd Centre offers a unique and **world-leading Early Intervention System** that helps children with hearing loss learn to listen and speak.

While our centres offer **in-person services**, our team are also experts in delivering services remotely, using our **Online Telehealth System**.

We can tailor the delivery method most suited to your family, based on your family's needs.

Our care team are specialised and trained in working with children with hearing loss.

- Audiology
- Child and family counselling
- Listening and spoken language therapy
- Speech pathology
- Group programs
- Social skills support
- School readiness
- Parenting programs
- Early education/school visits
- Collaborative service provider meetings
- Family meetings



IN PERSON



A MIX OF BOTH



ONLINE



FAQs

We know there is a lot of information to take in. See below some common questions we are asked which you might find helpful.



How do the LSLS, AUD and CFC work together? Why is a team-based approach important?

Our LSLS team, audiologists and Child and Family Counsellors collaborate closely to provide comprehensive care. This team-based approach ensures that all aspects of your child's development are addressed, from their hearing health to their language skills and emotional well-being. By working together, our specialists create a seamless, integrated care plan and team that supports your child's overall growth and success.



Will my child speak?

With early and effective intervention, many children with hearing loss can develop spoken language. At The Shepherd Centre, we focus on early intervention and use a proven approach that helps children listen and speak. Our evidence-based methods, combined with the expertise of our wraparound care team, support children in developing the communication skills they need to thrive in the hearing world.



Should my child learn Auslan too?

The decision to learn Auslan (Australian Sign Language) is a personal one and depends on your family's goals and child's needs. Many children learn more than one language and Auslan can be one of them. At The Shepherd Centre, our focus is on developing listening and spoken language skills but we recognise Auslan can be a valuable tool for some families. We do not teach Auslan but do work closely with interpreters, members of local communities and/or providers who do. We are here to support you in making the best decision for your child.



What are group play-based sessions? How do they help my child?

Group play-based sessions at The Shepherd Centre are designed to support your child's social, emotional and language development. While it may look like play, these structured sessions encourage communication, listening and peer interaction. Through play, children practice the skills they learn in therapy in a natural, engaging environment. By replicating 'real-world' situations and complex listening environments, it fosters the development of listening, speech and language skills and empowers caregivers to feel more confident.

First Sounds Implant Program

The First Sounds Implant Program is a joint initiative with the Sydney Children's Hospital Randwick.

This multidisciplinary service specialises in providing early and optimal access to sound for children (and their families) who are considering an implantable hearing solution.



The Shepherd Centre provides services for children with varying degrees and types of hearing loss.



Hearing aids, bone conduction devices and cochlear implants are all excellent hearing solutions. **The best option will differ from person to person.**

Hearing aids amplify sound (makes sound louder) via the typical hearing pathway.

Bone conduction devices amplify sound via bone conduction directly to the cochlear.

Cochlear implants provide sound by bypassing damaged parts of the inner ear and stimulating the auditory nerve, which then sends signals to the brain to interpret as sound.

For many children, a hearing aid or bone conduction device can provide the optimal access to sound needed for typical speech and language development. For other children a cochlear implant may be required to ensure optimal access to sound. Whichever device is used, ongoing care and maintenance are important. The Shepherd Centre is here for you and able to provide support for implantable devices throughout your child's life.

The First Sounds Implant Program provides audiological, medical and family support, as well as speech, language and listening therapy sessions – all are essential to support a child and their family prior to, during and in the long-term, following device implant surgeries. Most appointments are held at your local Shepherd Centre branch.

The First Sounds Implant Program is comprehensive and evidence based. This connected approach maximises the benefits of implants and supports each child's unique needs so they can thrive and reach their full potential.

The Shepherd Centre offers world-leading practices and are proud of our research and results. We will continue to publish our outcomes, sharing our expertise as one of the largest paediatric implant programs in Australia.



If your child is unwell



How do you know when to keep your child home from the Centre?

A sniffle. A cough. A sore throat. Children can quickly come down with illnesses big and small. Some are contagious, some are not. If your child is presenting the below symptoms - it's best to stay home.

Just four questions to ask before your visit.

To know whether your child should stay at home, we suggest answering these quick questions:

- 1. Does your child have a fever?**
Fevers of 38°C or more are generally a sign of illness, so children should stay home from the Centre.
- 2. Is your child feeling well enough** to participate in their one-on-one or group session, or attend Pre-School? If they seem out of sorts, lethargic, or not quite themselves, they might not fully benefit from the session and may not have a positive experience.
- 3. Do you think your child has a contagious illness**, such as the flu, HFM, RSV, Covid or conjunctivitis? If so, keep them at home until they're no longer infectious.
- 4. Does your child have discharge** coming from their ears? If so, keep them at home and make an appointment to see your GP.

When children should stay home.

Fever helps fight infections. Keep your child home if their temperature is 38°C or higher, and wait until they're fever-free before returning.

Diarrhoea is often caused by infection, food poisoning or medications. Keep children home until stools are formed and the doctor approves. Keep your child well hydrated.

Vomiting is usually from a virus or infection, keep your child home if they've vomited twice or more in 24 hours. They can return once symptoms clear or the doctor gives clearance.

Severe cough / cold may signal croup or other contagious conditions like viral bronchitis and whooping cough. It could also indicate asthma or allergies. Keep your child at home if symptoms are severe.

Sore throats can be a symptom of strep or a common cold. If your child has been diagnosed with strep throat, keep your child at home for at least 24 hours after starting antibiotics.



The Shepherd Centre



Keeping everyone safe

Safety is a shared responsibility and it's essential that we all do our part to keep our centres a safe, secure and welcoming place for everyone.



Sun safety: We are a sun-smart organisation. Children must wear a hat that shades their face, neck and ears during outdoor activities. Please provide a clearly labeled hat, dress your child in protective clothing (like tops with sleeves) and apply sunscreen at home each morning.

Hand hygiene: We encourage everyone to wash their hands regularly, especially before eating and after using the restroom. Hand sanitisers are available at various points in the centre.

Allergies: Some children may have severe or anaphylactic allergies, please inform our staff if this applies to your child. All centres maintain a strict no-nut policy. Even if your child doesn't have allergies, we ask that you wash your hands thoroughly before entering the centre to help us protect all children.

Settling your child into group programs: During programs like Kidscape, your child will be cared for in a group setting while you attend an hour-long Parent Group. To help with their adjustment, share their interests with our staff in advance so we can include them in playtime. If your child is upset, unwell or had a tough night, please inform a staff member. Saying goodbye when you leave helps your child adjust and fosters trust for future separations.

Supervising your child: Parents/carers are responsible for supervising and managing their child's behaviour at all times in our centres.

Emergency procedures: An emergency evacuation plan is displayed at all centres. If a drill occurs while you're present, please follow any instructions given by wardens.

Our cancellation policy

GOV16 Service Fees and Charges Pricing Policy

We encourage families to provide as much notice as possible when cancelling or rescheduling appointments. Late cancellations or frequent missed appointments can affect service access for other families.



Cancellation fees

Individual appointment / single group session

- Notice required: Cancellations made with less than two (2) business days' notice will incur a fee as outlined in the NDIS Pricing Arrangements.
- Fee: cost capped at one (1) hour and one (1) clinician.

Full group program

- Notice required: Cancellations made with less than five (5) business days' notice will incur a fee, please send your cancellation in writing to groups@shepherdcentre.org.au
- Fee: Full program cost.

Exiting a group mid-program

- Notice required: In writing to groups@shepherdcentre.org.au
- Fee: Cost of the next two (2) sessions.

Exceptions

Cancellations are exempt from fees if:

- We cannot run the group due to public health orders (e.g., COVID restrictions)
- Families are required to self-isolate or are awaiting test results (e.g., COVID). Documentation may be required.
- Kidscape is not a registered group and no cancellation notice or fee applies.

Cancellations by The Shepherd Centre staff

If we need to cancel an appointment, we will attempt to reschedule. In case of short notice due to staff illness, families will be contacted as soon as possible, and a session with another clinician may be offered. If not possible, the session will be rescheduled.

Continuous cancellations by families

Frequent cancellations (e.g., 2-3 consecutive or over 30% of sessions in a term, excluding illness/holidays) can affect your child's progress. We are committed to working with you to understand any challenges and explore adjustments to sessions or additional support services. If ongoing difficulties affect attendance and we're unable to reach you after several attempts, we'll follow up in writing. If the next session is missed without notice, we may need to temporarily pause your child's involvement in the program. However, families are always welcome to reconnect and rejoin whenever ready.

Examples of two (2) clear business days' (48 hours) notice

- Notifying us on Thursday for a Monday appointment is less than 2 business days' notice.
- Notifying us on Wednesday for a Monday appointment is 2 business days' notice.



Feedback

Compliments and Complaints

**At The Shepherd Centre,
we actively encourage feedback
because we believe every voice matters.**

We are committed to making sure everyone feels valued and heard, as your input helps us continually improve and provide the best support for your child.



The Shepherd Centre:

- Wants to provide you the best service possible
- Values all feedback, compliments and complaints
- Handles feedback and complaints fairly and confidentially
- Aims to promptly reach a resolution

SCAN FOR TSC
CONTACT PAGE



You are able to provide feedback by:

- Talking to your clinician
- Email feedbackandcomplaints@shepherdcentre.org.au
- Via our website www.shepherdcentre.org.au
- Participate in our surveys or other feedback groups
- Call us on 02 9370 4400

SCAN FOR
NDIS COMMISSION
CONTACT PAGE



You may also choose to make a complaint to:

- The NSW Ombudsman on 02 9286 1000
- Australian Human Rights Commission on 1300 656 419
- Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission on 13 22 62
- NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission on 1800 035 544

The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, is an independent commission established to improve the quality and safety of services funded by the National Disability Insurance Scheme. The NDIS Commission works with participants and providers to improve the quality and safety of NDIS services and supports. Sharing feedback can help to improve services for you and other people. You have the right to raise a concern about NDIS supports if you are not happy. The NDIS Commission will work with you, and with providers and workers, to resolve problems and improve the quality and safety of NDIS supports - for you and other participants.



The Shepherd Centre



Keep in touch



ACT

- Rivett, Canberra



(02) 9370 4400



enquiries@shepherdcentre.org.au



shepherdcentre.org.au



facebook.com/shepherdcentre/



instagram.com/shepherdcentre/

NSW

- Central Coast
- Liverpool
- Macquarie University
- Newcastle and surrounds
- Newtown
- Oran Park
- Shellharbour
- Wollongong

TAS

- Hobart
- Launceston



The Shepherd Centre

Giving deaf children a voice



My healthcare rights

This is the second edition of the **Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights**.

These rights apply to all people in all places where health care is provided in Australia.

The Charter describes what you, or someone you care for, can expect when receiving health care.



safetyandquality.gov.au

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**AUSTRALIAN COMMISSION
ON SAFETY AND QUALITY IN HEALTH CARE**

For more information
ask a member of staff or visit
safetyandquality.gov.au/your-rights

I have a right to:

Access

- Healthcare services and treatment that meets my needs

Safety

- Receive safe and high quality health care that meets national standards
- Be cared for in an environment that is safe and makes me feel safe

Respect

- Be treated as an individual, and with dignity and respect
- Have my culture, identity, beliefs and choices recognised and respected

Partnership

- Ask questions and be involved in open and honest communication
- Make decisions with my healthcare provider, to the extent that I choose and am able to
- Include the people that I want in planning and decision-making

Information

- Clear information about my condition, the possible benefits and risks of different tests and treatments, so I can give my informed consent
- Receive information about services, waiting times and costs
- Be given assistance, when I need it, to help me to understand and use health information
- Access my health information
- Be told if something has gone wrong during my health care, how it happened, how it may affect me and what is being done to make care safe

Privacy

- Have my personal privacy respected
- Have information about me and my health kept secure and confidential

Give feedback

- Provide feedback or make a complaint without it affecting the way that I am treated
- Have my concerns addressed in a transparent and timely way
- Share my experience and participate to improve the quality of care and health services