

# Linguistic Neglect in Child Welfare System

**Needs Statements:** Child Welfare addresses different kinds of abuse, but linguistic neglect is not one of the abuses. Linguistic neglect harms many Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind, and Deafplus children as they lack access to learn language, even ASL, Black American Sign Language, Indigenous Sign Language, ProTactile, and other country sign language. Many parents (high percentage of hearing parents) don't know what to do or how to deal with the consequences like overwhelmed emotions and in addition, they receive misinformation from audiologist and medical, and/or culture/barrier system.

**Proposal:** The linguistic neglect policy needs to be added into the Child Welfare System because it is considered as linguistic neglect can be abusive and have long-term impacts on Deaf children's overall well-being. Language deprivation in the Deaf community shows increased risk in mental health, attachment style, social skill, cognitive development, and identity.

*“Deaf people can do anything except hear” – I King Jordan*

## **Fact:**

- 90-95% of deaf children has hearing parents
- 22 or less percentage of hearing parents know/learn sign language
- 70% of deaf and deafplus children in America have language deprivation

## **Outcome if it become one of the abuse lists:**

- Deaf children experience reduced barriers to learning language that align with their needs
- Reduced risk of adverse mental health, attachment issue, lack of cognitive and critical thinking and disruptive behavior among Deaf children

## **What happen to linguistic neglect report to the child welfare**

- The CPS staff will be investigating the families
- If the families are considering as abuse, they will go to the court.
- The judge will order the families to take ASL classes and involved with one of the programs in Washington State as dependency
- If the families are obligating the court order, the deaf children will thrive the bilingual languages and abilities to learn. It will reduce their tantrums, meltdown, and bully, etc. It will improve their relationship and Deaf and Deafplus children's future such as protective factors like job and go college, etc.
- When the Deaf children separate from their families, they will stay at the foster parents who know ASL
- The Deaf children and their families will meet volunteer Deaf role models