

baea

British
Association
Of
Educational
Audiologists

THE EDUCATIONAL AUDIOL OGIST

Role and Competencies Document

Website Version March 2003

*A full version of this Document can be obtained from Brian Barney at
ulrome@aol.com*

The DfEE have defined Educational Audiologists as teachers holding the MQ(HI) qualification in Educational Audiology at Masters level. They are employed by schools, health services or LEA advisory/support services and may undertake some elements of the work identified for Paediatric Audiology Services in addition to the standard range of work defined for Teachers of the Deaf working for LEA advisory/support services. (DfEE 2001).

“The challenge of Educational Audiology today is to respond knowledgeably, efficiently and flexibly in an evolving role in terms of rapidly changing technology, increasing sophistication of testing techniques, new Government initiatives, ever increasing parental expectations and the demand for improving outcomes. It is hoped that this document will set the Educational Audiologist within a framework that will both promote the role and encourage positive change and adaptation.” (BAEA 2001)

THE ROLE OF THE EDUCATIONAL AUDIOLOGIST

The role of the educational audiologist has been developing for over fifty years. (Tucker I and Nolan M 1984). The British Association of Educational Audiologists was formed in 1997. The organisation identified a need to create a clear perception of the role of the in the UK. The first document defining the role of the Educational Audiologist which was produced in 1999 was based on Government legislation and policy documents on special educational needs. These included: The Children Act 1993; The Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (DFE 1994); Excellence for all, Meeting Special Educational Needs (DfEE 1997); and Meeting Special Educational Needs, A Programme of Action (DfEE 1998) and Quality Standards in Paediatric Audiology (NDCS 1994), (NDCS 1996).

The advent of Universal Neonatal Hearing Screening will have a significant impact on the development of support services for hearing impaired children. The publication of the Quality Standards in Paediatric Audiology Volume 4 (NDCS 2000) gives clear guidelines for the early identification and the management of children with a hearing loss. As a result the original BAEA document has been reviewed in the light of these developments and the potential role for the educational audiologist as the 'key-link' worker is considered within this document. With the training and background the Educational Audiologist is ideally placed to play the major role in the early intervention and early years support for the child and family following diagnosis.

The Educational Audiologist's role extends throughout the pre-school and school years and is cross-phase in nature, encompassing all hearing impaired children including children with additional difficulties. Many of the skills and responsibilities outlined in this document are shared with other professionals, particularly Teachers of the Deaf and clinically based audiologists. The nature of the role varies within different settings. Educational Audiologists may work in a range of educational settings (e.g. special schools, support services, cochlear implant programmes). The competencies outlined include all aspects of the profession. Individual responsibilities may include some or all aspects of the role as defined within this document. The considerable contribution made by all Educational Audiologists within a wide range of educational settings is highly valued by the BAEA.

For Scottish readers where reference is made to statements and statementing, please read records and recording; and for Key Stages read 5-14 Guidelines.

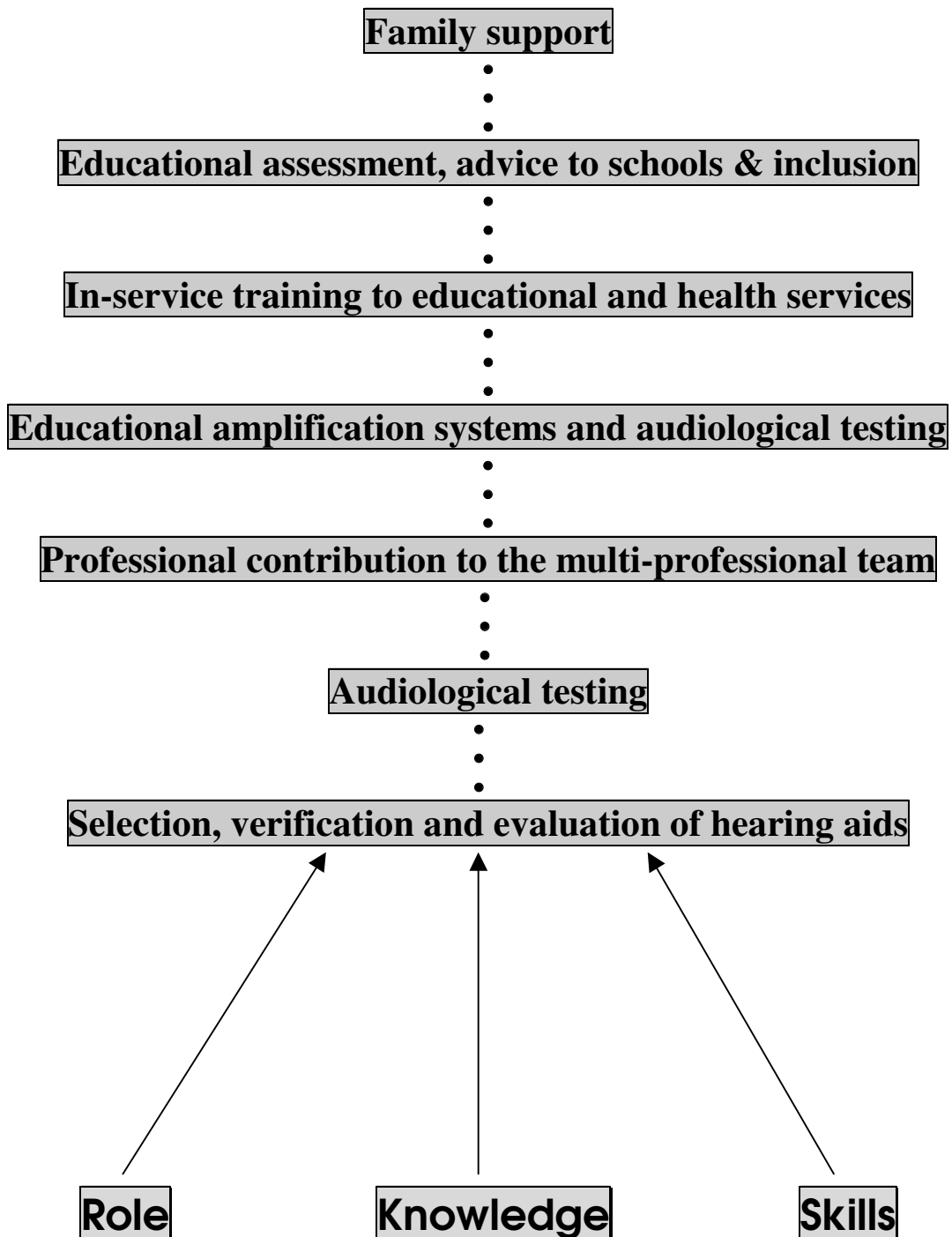
Brian Barney
Chair of BAEA

Contents

Context

- 1. Family Support.**
- 2. Educational Assessment, Advice to Schools and Inclusion.**
- 3. In-service Training to Educational and Health Services.**
- 4. Educational Amplification Systems and Audiological Testing.**
- 5. Professional Contribution to Multi-professional Team.**
- 6. Audiological Testing.**
- 7. Selection, Verification and Evaluation of Hearing Aids.**
- 8. Principal Outcomes**

The Role of the Educational Audiologist



CONTEXT

- Effective provision for hearing impaired children requires a team commitment within a seamless, family friendly support service (NDCS 2000). This includes a range of professionals including paediatric audiologists and Teachers of the Deaf. The important contribution of every professional is essential in the provision of effective, ongoing, quality support for hearing impaired children and their families.
- The purpose of this document is to define the specific role of the Educational Audiologist within this team.
- All Educational Audiologists have a post graduate qualification in Audiology (MSc or Diploma). This is additional to a mandatory award as Teachers of the Deaf and Qualified Teacher Status.
- The Educational Audiologist brings experience and training in education and audiology to the team. This facilitates a positive partnership with other disciplines, particularly with health and education services.
- Hearing impaired children should be diagnosed as soon as possible after birth to ensure the earliest possible intervention from health and education professionals. Early detection and management will help to reduce the impact on the child's social, intellectual and linguistic development (NDCS 2000).
- The advent of Universal Neonatal Hearing Screening enables consistent early identification. Early identification needs to be supported by quality intervention and habilitation if the child is to gain maximum benefit. Effective coordination of this provision is essential if the needs of every child are to be met efficiently and effectively (BAEA 1999).
- The NDCS Quality Standards in Paediatric Audiology (NDCS 2000) identifies the importance of the "key (link) worker as a facilitator and link person for each child".
- The Educational Audiologist is ideally situated to fulfil the role as the key (link) worker as outlined within the Quality Standards (NDCS 2000). Interagency links provide a powerful basis for effective collaboration between health and education services.
- The Educational Audiologist has an overview of the child within the family, education provision and health service support. This allows for a holistic approach to meeting the needs of the individual hearing impaired child.
- Educational Audiologists are able to fulfil the role of the educationalist with an audiological overview of the child from diagnosis or the key worker if also an early year's specialist. Many Educational Audiologists are fulfilling the joint role of audiology and early years support thus ensuring positive, effective professional continuity.

1. FAMILY SUPPORT

Role

Educational Audiologists may:

- Act as a key member of team offering a seamless family friendly support service for all hearing impaired children (NDCS 2000).
- Be present at the time of confirmation of hearing loss and arrange to visit the home within two working days of diagnosis (NDCS 2000).
- Be involved in the establishment of a positive partnership involving parents fully in all decision-making processes.
- Play a key role in supporting the family following the diagnosis of hearing loss in their child.
- Help parents to interact positively with their hearing impaired child to help to develop the child's full potential.
- Interpret audiological information for the family and explain the short and long term implications for the child.
- Advise the family about speech and language development based on knowledge of child development and the impact of hearing loss/appropriate intervention.
- Demonstrate through interaction with the young hearing impaired child, the importance of play in language development.
- Be available to answer questions and provide information on issues relating to the child's hearing loss.
- Provide information about the support available for the child and family.
- Provide information for the family on amplification including hearing aids and cochlear implants. They should provide clear accessible and balanced information about amplification options (NDCS 2000).
- Provide information on deaf issues and awareness, including communication options (NDCS 2000).
- Objectively and subjectively monitor and record the child's linguistic progress, auditory development through hearing aids and general progress.
- Monitor and co-ordinate support from health and education perspectives throughout the child's education.
- Establish and encourage family support networks that can work as a group independently or as part of a national framework (e.g. N.D.C.S.)

Knowledge

- Counselling skills in relation to supporting families of deaf children.
- Understanding of child development and the implications of hearing impairment.
- Appreciation of the implications of the degree and type of hearing loss on the child's progress.
- Understanding of different models of family-centred support (RNID/NDCS 2000).
- Knowledge of confidentiality and data protection issues (RNID/NDCS 2000).
- Knowledge of organisations representing deaf people and contact details for local support groups.

Skills

- Ability to communicate with and support families following the diagnosis of hearing impairment in their child.
- Ability to support parents emotionally and to encourage coping strategies for families.
- Ability to listen attentively to parent's priorities and concerns and respect the perspective of the family.
- Ability to develop an initial care plan in partnership with all involved.
- Ability to communicate clearly in spoken and written mode (RNID/NDCS 2000).
- Signing skills in BSL to a minimum level of CACDP Stage 1 (NDCS 2000) and/or skills in working with interpreters for families with other than English/spoken English as their home language.
- Ability to work with interpreters to communicate effectively with families using British Sign Language or another oral language (RNID/NDCS 2000).
- Ability to involve parents in the decision-making processes regarding communication modes, audiology and communication options.
- Ability to act as an advocate on behalf of the child and family (RNID/NDCS 2000).

2. EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT, ADVICE TO SCHOOLS AND INCLUSION

Role

The Educational Audiologist may:

- Collaborate with the Health Service to identify hearing impaired children and to provide the LEA with an assessment of needs and the educational implications of a hearing loss.
- Provide advice on classroom management, noise reduction/classroom amplification/personal radio aid systems.
- Provide advice on the management of educational audiological equipment and associated budget/income generation. The management of quality systems for maintenance and use of educational audiological equipment.
- Have oversight of access issues for schools and other educational establishments.
- Make recommendations about placement, communication needs, and appropriate teaching strategies, in conjunction with Teachers of the Deaf.
- Facilitate collaborative working with other disciplines and agencies to provide a seamless support service for hearing impaired children in schools.
- Advise schools on the educational implications of hearing loss for individual children and the effective management of their needs within a range of educational settings throughout all key stages.
- Collaborate with Teachers of the Deaf and schools in setting objectives, monitoring educational and audiological provision and progress, for hearing impaired school age children with Statements of Special Educational Needs.
- Provide the LEA with an audiological report and educational advice to facilitate the statementing process at school entry.
- Advise the LEA and schools on the hearing implications for children with multiple or complex special educational needs.
- Monitor hearing levels of individual children through audiological assessments. Advise parents and professionals on the effects of any fluctuations on the needs and progress of the child.
- Provide input into the Annual Review process for children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs.
- Facilitate inclusion through advice to pre-school and school provision on the positive management of hearing impaired children within the educational setting (BAEA 1999).

Knowledge

- Working knowledge of relevant legislation relating to the assessment and provision for children with special educational needs.
- Understanding of educational assessment procedures, professional roles and responsibilities within the LEA.
- Familiarity with the range of educational provision and support available for hearing impaired children and children with complex educational needs.
- Knowledge of inclusion policy within the LEA.

Skills

- Ability to interpret audiological results and their implications for individual children.
- Ability to profile the developing auditory, communication and linguistic development of children with a hearing loss.
- Ability to develop an individual listening therapy programme to ensure maximum benefit of amplification provided.
- Ability to provide balanced information to parents relating to the assessment process, communication and educational options for hearing impaired children.
- Ability to provide advice and training to schools on the implications of hearing loss, deaf awareness issues and effective habilitation within the school environment.
- Ability to advise schools on the positive management of the school environment with the use of acoustic treatment and amplification systems.
- Ability to advise schools on the needs of children within their particular educational setting.

3. IN-SERVICE TRAINING TO EDUCATIONAL AND HEALTH SERVICE PROFESSIONALS.

Role:

The Educational Audiologist may:

- Provide in-service training for educational and health service staff relating to the implications of a hearing loss in children.
- Provide advice and training to schools on the implications of hearing loss, deaf awareness issues and effective habilitation within the school environment.
- Advise schools on the positive management of the school environment with the use of acoustic treatment and amplification systems.
- Advise schools on the needs of hearing impaired children within a particular educational setting.

Knowledge

- Knowledge of the basics of audiological science.
- Understanding of the anatomy and physiology of the auditory system.
- Knowledge of the causes and types of hearing loss.
- Current knowledge of the hearing aid range and other amplification systems.
- Understanding of the implications of varying hearing losses on language and educational development.
- Knowledge of referral and testing procedures.
- Understanding of support, intervention and habilitation models and procedures.
- Understanding of classroom acoustics and the value of soundproofing treatments, radio aids, auditory training units, FM and soundfield systems within a range of educational settings.
- Knowledge of national legislation relating to children with special educational needs. An understanding of the relevance of these in the assessment and habilitation of hearing impaired children.
- Background knowledge of the range of current educational issues (e.g. the National Curriculum, Statements, transition plans and special arrangements for National Examinations) and their implications in the management of hearing impaired children.

Skills

- Ability to deliver relevant and effective in-service training on hearing loss and related issues to a wide range of professionals in both the health and education sectors.
- Ability to work with a range of professionals to raise awareness of deaf issues and the implications of hearing loss in children.
- Ability to present effective information to parents and other professionals on a wide range of issues related to hearing impairment.

4. EDUCATIONAL AMPLIFICATION SYSTEMS

Role

The Educational Audiologist may:

- Advise on the use of personal hearing aids in school, including radio aids and effective management of the aids.
- Make recommendations for improving the listening environment in schools through management and acoustic treatment.
- Advise schools on the appropriate use of FM, hard wire and infra-red systems within a range of educational settings.
- Advise educational establishments on the use of soundfield systems.
- Advise families on the availability of assistive listening devices.
- Advise on the use of FM systems (both personal and soundfield) within an educational setting using total communication.

Knowledge

- Understanding of FM, hard wire and infra-red systems.
- Knowledge of practical application of these systems within a range of educational settings.
- Working knowledge about soundfield amplification systems and their usage.
- Knowledge about auditory training units.
- Understanding of the range of assistive listening devices and their application.

Skills

- Ability to give advice on the appropriate use of educational amplification systems to meet the needs of individual children within a particular educational setting.
- Ability to provide appropriate instruction and training on systems provided following installation.
- Ability to maintain an overview of the FM systems in use to ensure they are balanced, well maintained and set to appropriate frequencies.
- Ability to raise awareness of the need for a good listening environment for all children.

5. PROFESSIONAL CONTRIBUTION TO MULTI-PROFESSIONAL TEAM.

Role

Educational audiologists may:

- Work as part of a team within a school, hearing impaired or sensory support service.
- Collaborate with health services to ensure that all children with hearing impairment are promptly, identified and provided with appropriate audiological and educational support.
- Assist the LEA to keep a register of children with a disability.
- Collaborate with other professionals in both the Health and Education Services to ensure appropriate support is provided from identification and throughout the child's development.
- Maintain records for future use by educational establishments.
- Work closely with a wide range of professionals within education and health, such as Teachers of the Deaf, Health Visitors, Speech and Language Therapists, ENT Consultants, Paediatricians, Social Workers, pre-school providers, school staff and voluntary agencies.
- Work closely with education and health professionals to ensure co-ordination between services so that parents receive consistent and appropriate information.
- Input into the Regional Audiology Working Group (NDCS 2000) to ensure that a quality service is developed and maintained through audit, review and forward planning.

Knowledge

- Understanding the roles, skills and responsibilities of all the professional and voluntary services within the locality.
- Understanding of how to deliver a co-ordinated service for children with hearing impairment and children with complex needs.
- Familiarity with local processes for assessment and referral to audiological services and other agencies.
- Ability to audit service delivery to the families of young children including educational support.
- Up-to-date knowledge of legislation relating to the statutory assessment of hearing impaired children's special educational needs.

- Understanding of child development, progress and expectations particularly with regards to the development of receptive and expressive language. The ability to relate this to the hearing impaired child.
- Knowledge and ability to communicate regarding the range of amplification options available and the procedures for selection, verification and evaluation
- An understanding of family dynamics and of the most effective mechanisms for empowering and enskilling family members in the management and realisation of benefit of audiological equipment.
- Awareness of the cultural considerations that should be taken into account when providing information on hearing loss and amplification options.
- Up to date knowledge of communication options (e.g. oral/aural approach, total communication and bilingualism)
- Background knowledge of the curriculum at different Key stages (including the National Curriculum, Numeracy and Literacy Strategies)
- Knowledge of the educational options available to children and their families.

Skills

- Ability to work as a member of a team with other service professionals and voluntary agencies to provide a seamless, family friendly service.
- Ability to offer active empathetic support to family members and to enable family members to develop their knowledge and resources in the context of diagnosed childhood deafness.
- Ability to establish and maintain positive working relationships, with a range of other professionals, within a multi-agency team.
- Ability to respect professional roles and boundaries within a multi-professional team with empathy and support.
- Good verbal and written communication skills with the other professionals involved and crucially with the children and families involved.
- Ability to participate fully within the Regional or Local Audiology Working Group (NDCS 2000) to shape audit and planning to achieve a quality service for all hearing impaired children in the area.
- Ability to advise and participate in the educational assessment of children.

6. AUDIOLOGICAL TESTING

Role

Educational Audiologists may:

- Work with the audiological team in the management of the screening programmes including universal neonatal screening.
- Monitor children within the clinic setting using a full range of tests.
- Assess children within the school environment and provide information to the school regarding the results and the implications for the management of the child's educational provision.
- Interpret results from the full range of behavioural and objective tests to advise families and other professionals on the implications of hearing thresholds.
- Advise families and other professionals on the implications of all types of hearing loss and hearing function.
- Advise families and other professionals on the effective management of the needs of the child.
- Input into the formal assessment process to advise the LEA on the implications of a hearing loss on the child's special educational needs.
- Monitoring the children's hearing levels following identification of hearing loss and throughout their educational career.

Knowledge

- Working knowledge of screening, surveillance and audiometric principles and procedures for the audiological assessment of pre-school and school age children.
- A thorough knowledge and overview of what good services can offer in line with the Quality Standards Documentation (NDCS 1994, 1996, 1999, 2000).
- Knowledge of the relationship between audiological techniques and a child's developmental stage.
- The ability to interpret and understand the results from the full range of audiological tests including:
 - a. Otoacoustic emissions
 - b. Auditory Brainstem Responses
 - c. Distraction Tests.
 - d. Performance Tests.
 - e. Visual Reinforcement Audiometry (including insert VRA)
 - f. Pure Tone Audiometry
 - g. Speech tests

- h. Tympanometry
 - i. Otoscopy
 - j. New testing techniques as they become available.
- The ability to interpret the result in terms of type of hearing loss (conductive, sensori-neural, functional, mixed etc.) and interpret results in terms of degree of hearing loss (mild, moderate, severe and profound).
 - Working knowledge of organisation and referral systems within the locality.
 - Ability to monitor hearing levels and check for any deterioration or fluctuation in hearing thresholds.

Skills

- The ability to work as part of a multi-professional team in the assessment and monitoring of the child's hearing levels and the ongoing management of the child's hearing aids.
- Selection and implementation of appropriate test techniques for an individual child.
- The ability to assess the hearing of children with complex needs and very young children.
- Interpretation and communication of results from all tests for parents and other professionals.
- Proficiency in the administration of the following test procedures:
 - a) Pure tone audiometry (including air conduction, bone conduction and masking).
 - b) Distraction testing (including Visual Reinforcement Audiometry insert VRA, and Behavioural Observation Audiometry).
 - c) Performance testing.
 - d) Speech discrimination testing.
 - e) Tympanometry.
 - f) Otoscopy.

7. SELECTION, VERIFICATION AND EVALUATION OF HEARING AIDS.

Role

The Educational Audiologist may:

- Work closely with the Health Service to ensure optimum personal hearing aid provision for all hearing impaired children.
- Give guidance to families and professionals about the development of good listening skills.
- Give advice on encouraging a positive attitude to hearing aid use by hearing impaired children.
- Encourage good use of residual hearing through optimum use of hearing aids by establishing a programme of effective hearing aid management including daily subjective testing by parents and regular objective testing by the Educational Audiologist.
- Be a member of the area's Children's Hearing Aid Clinic team which provides regular assessment of hearing and monitoring of hearing aid settings through the verification and evaluation process.
- Evaluate the functional use of hearing aids in both clinical and non-standard settings including the use of speech in noise testing, observation schedules and pupil consultation.
- Collaborate with the family and audiological team in recommending assessment for a cochlear implant when conventional hearing aids are felt to provide inadequate amplification.

Knowledge

- Working knowledge about body worn, post aural, ITE and ITC hearing aids.
- Background knowledge about analogue and digital systems.
- Knowledge about transposition aids, bone anchored hearing aids, tactile hearing aids and cochlear implants.
- Understanding of real ear measurements, real ear to coupler differences and real ear to dial differences.
- Knowledge of prescription formulae and targets in the fitting, verification and evaluation procedures.
- Understanding of hearing aid terminology (e.g. gain, frequency response, harmonic distortion and maximum output).

- Understanding of hearing aid microphones, receivers, output limiting systems, telecoil loop systems, batteries, control of acoustic feedback and tone hooks.
- Knowledge about impression procedures, earmould types, materials available and their application.
- Understanding of earmould modifications (venting, horning and damping).
- Knowledge about tubing types and retubing.

Skills

- To be able to work with the Clinical Audiologist in the use of prescription formulae in the selection of hearing aids for the needs of individual children.
- Ability to verify hearing aid settings using test box analysis, real ear measurements and aided responses.
- The ability to maintain ongoing critical analysis of the hearing aid performance using information from pupil and parent observation, feedback from other professionals and the use of prescription formulae.
- Skill in efficient and regular electroacoustic testing.
- The efficient management of all systems (including manual checking, fault finding and adjusting).
- Identification of problems related to earmoulds and tubing.
- Ability to work with or request earmould modifications using venting, horning and damping to improve client comfort, fitting and other requirements.

PRINCIPAL OUTCOMES

1. Hearing impaired children develop to their full potential and see themselves as making a worthwhile contribution as active citizens within society (NDCS, 1996).
2. The child with congenital deafness is diagnosed within the first year of life and is referred promptly to the Education Service (NDCS, 1994).
3. At the time of confirmation of deafness an Educational Audiologist is present and makes contact at home within two working days (NDCS, 1996).
4. All children with acquired deafness are identified early and referred to the LEA (NDCS, 1994).
5. The Educational Audiologist and Health Service work together to foster the auditory capability of the hearing impaired child through the appropriate prescription and management of a suitable amplification package (NDCS, 1996), (Pither et al 1996).
6. Hearing aids are fitted within four weeks of confirmation of hearing loss (NDCS, 1991).
7. Access to appropriate range of assistive devices in the classroom setting.
8. Hearing aids and assistive devices should be used appropriately and effectively.
9. The Educational Audiologist, other education services, health services, social services, independent voluntary agencies, work together to provide a seamless service for families of deaf children (DfE, 1994), (DfEE, 1998), (DoH 1991).
10. The Educational Audiologist is ideally placed to play the role of Key(link) worker within the seamless service because of the training and background in both education and health provisions (NDCS 2000).
11. The Educational Audiologist provides the LEA with strategic advice for SEN planning (DfEE, 1998).
12. All hearing impaired children receive an inclusive education within both mainstream and special school environments enabling them to achieve their full potential (DfEE, 1998).
13. The Educational Audiologist has access to new developments and training, and undertakes research (DfEE, 1998).
14. The Educational Audiologist provides teachers of the deaf and associated staff with regular update training in aspects of educational audiology (DfEE, 1998).
15. The Educational Audiologist has an input into health service inset as an active member of the area hearing clinic team and paediatric working group.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND REFERENCES

DFE (1994) Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs. HMSO

DfEE (1997) Excellence for all children. Meeting Special Educational Needs. S.O.

DfEE (1998) Meeting Special Educational Needs. A Programme of Action S.O. Ltd.

SOEID (1994) ESPEN - Effective Provision for Special Educational Needs.

SOEID (1996) Circular 4/9, Children and Young Persons with Special Educational Needs.

SOEID (1998) A Manual of Good Practice in Special Educational Needs / Professional Practice in Meeting Special Educational Needs.

SOEID (1999) The Parents Guide to Special Educational Needs. DOH (1991) The Children Act & Local Authorities. DOH Publications.

Johnson, C.D; Benson, V.P.; Seaton (1997) Education Audiology Handbook. Singular Publishing Group inc. London.

Tucker I. and Nolan M. (1984) Education Audiology, Croom Helm.

NDCS (1994) Quality Standards in Paediatric Audiology Vol. 1 NDCS.

NDCS (1996) Quality Standards in Paediatric Audiology Vol. 2 NDCS.

NDCS (2000) Quality Standards in Paediatric Audiology Vol. 4 NDCS.

Pither et. al. (1996) Working Group Draft Proposals, MSc Audiology Course. Unpublished.

RNID/NDCS (2000) Statement of Professional Competencies. RNID.

NDCS (1999) Quality Standards in Education. NDCS.

BAEA (1999) The Role of the Educational Audiologist. Unpublished.

BAEA (2000) Competencies for Educational Audiologists: Draft Version. Unpublished.

DfEE (2001) Neonatal Screening: “Who Does What”

