

An Educational Audiologist – Adding Value to services for deaf children.

BAEA View.

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Summary:

An Educational Audiologist (EA) must be an experienced TOD before they commence with the MSc/Diploma for Educational Audiology. An Educational Audiologist brings a combination of knowledge, skills, and experience that are unique within the field of deaf education, eg. Language development, speech discrimination, Auditory processing skills (APS) development, speech and room acoustics, assistive Listening devices (ALD), radio aids, soundfield systems, hearing aids and cochlear implants/ implanted aids.

An EA brings an understanding of the way amplification, acoustics, ALD and speech discrimination/APS interplay in the speech, language and communication development and access to learning for a deaf baby, child or young person (CYP) that no other professional can or does.

An EA understands the relationships between listening to learn in various settings, cognition and expected levels of progress.

An EA has skills, knowledge and experience of working routinely across the entire age range, currently from birth to 19 years. With the establishment of the Educational and Health Care Plan (EHCP) system it is most likely the EA will routinely work with some young deaf adults up to the age of 25 years.

Although a TOD has the skills to assess and evaluate language development, they do not have the skills to identify whether a deaf CYP's functional use of hearing is optimal and how it is influencing language development.

The MSc/Diploma that qualifies a TOD to become an EA gives them significantly enhanced skills and knowledge for working, assessing and evaluating the complete progress of the deaf CYP.

Many services consider an EA as an 'essential' post but not a 'statutory' post. The position of the BAEA is that all deaf CYPs benefit from access to the enhanced skills of an EA and that as a **minimum** every service should have provision of an EA for all deaf CYPs who have a severe or profound hearing loss. Our position is also that this provision should be 'statutory' as BAEA have collected case studies which show that outcomes for the deaf CYP are enhanced through access they have received from an EA.

There are many aspects of work from an EA that may not be expected from a TOD.

Early Years.

An EA is able to work in liaison with:

TODs who are specialised to work with this age range. Clinical paediatric audiologists. Other professionals supporting the child and their family.

An EA assists in the process of understanding phonetic development and auditory sensory experience.

An EA can fit and evaluate the efficacy of radio aids for language development and assisting a family's better interaction and communication with their deaf CYP.

An EA has counselling skills when working with families of this age range; explaining the relationships between amplification, communication, functional hearing, cognition and language development.

An EA is an important member of the Multi-Agency Team around the Child (MA-TAC).

Primary Years

An EA can evaluate functional use of hearing in quiet and noise and the implications for access to learning for a deaf child.

Enhancing access to learning through ALD technology and evaluating the functioning efficacy of the technological intervention in the classroom is a fundamental aspect of the work of the EA. Eg. An EA can fit radio aids and soundfield systems and evaluate their efficacy in terms of access to learning.

An EA has knowledge to relate functional use of hearing with levels of cognitive demand and access to learning.

An EA has knowledge to relate functional use of hearing to social and emotional development; and how enhanced technology can assist social and emotional development. Eg. Multi-talker network radio aid systems.

An EA can analyse the access to phonemes in terms of an individual's frequency specific amplification needs to support Real Ear Measurement (REM) programming.

Secondary Years

Many similarities with the Primary years above. However, in addition the EA will work to facilitate independence, independent learning through control and manipulation of the deaf young person's amplification package.

The EA has the skills to continue to evaluate the deaf young person's developing APS as their auditory cortex develops to an adult level.

Acoustics

An EA can administer an acoustic survey and thus inform on compliance of a classroom for the teaching of a deaf child; and should the classroom be non-compliant give advice on acoustic treatment to attain compliance.

If a school has a choice of classrooms for placement of a deaf child then an EA acoustic survey will assist the school in choosing the best classroom to meet the needs of the deaf child.

Report writing

An EA is available to assist TODs in their report writing with regards to the audiological component of their reports, an important consideration should a tribunal be called to adjudicate the placement of a deaf child in a setting.

Health

The EA can relate professionally with medical paediatric audiologists from a basis of skills and knowledge pertaining to audiology and education.

Some EA work collaboratively with their paediatric audiologist colleagues through joint health/education assessment clinics; thus enhancing liaison between health and education in supporting deaf children and communicating with their families.

SEN/EHCP officers

The EA can inform and assist SEN/EHCP officers from a basis of skills and knowledge of all matters pertaining to audiology and education and the consequent relationships with speech, language and communication development and access to learning.

External bodies

The EA is skilled and knowledgeable about ALD and is therefore able to search out best value from manufacturers and suppliers for ALD technology. Saving services significant costs in their duty to supply technology to deaf CYP.

CHSWG (Children's Hearing Services Working Group) – The EA is a valued professional member of service provision for deaf children.

Knowledge

An EA is expected to remain updated on technological development with all matters 'amplification' for deaf children and the professional skills to disseminate that knowledge to their TOD teams thus raising skills and knowledge throughout a team.

An EA has access to the regional BAEA meetings to network with other EA's as part of the process for keeping skills and knowledge updated.

Sign Language

An EA has the skills to evaluate the speech discrimination skills, auditory processing skills and access to phonemes through specific frequency analysis to give informed data and produce empirical evidence over and above that a TOD can produce about the level of communicational need for sign language for a deaf child.

Audiologist in Education

An Audiologist in Education, by BAEA definition, is someone with clinical training, but not ToD qualification. This professional fills roles related to amplification, acoustics, and audiological explanations; but not to curriculum and learning.

MSc Educational Audiology course at Mary Hare Training

Currently this course is run bi-annually. This course is based upon the BAEA document: The Role of the Educational Audiologist-2016.

<http://www.educational-audiologists.org.uk/documents/roles.pdf>

This course has recently been Endorsed by BAA (British Academy of Audiology), March 2017 for 5 years.

The course details can be obtained via the following links.

<https://www.herts.ac.uk/apply/schools-of-study/education/partnerships-in-education/uk-education-partners>

<https://maryharschool.org.uk/courses/postgraduate-courses>

BAEA – NEC.