



Global Coalition of Parents of Children who
are Deaf or Hard of Hearing



European Federation of Parents of
Hearing Impaired Children

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Millions of Children Worldwide Have Unaddressed Hearing Loss

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), 34 million children worldwide have a disabling hearing loss. On **World Hearing Day**, 3 March 2021, a strong message about early identification and cost-effective interventions is being communicated by parent advocates with the Global Coalition of Parents of Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (www.gpodhh.org) and the European Federation of Parents of Hearing Impaired Children (www.fepeda.eu).

In the spirit of the WHO's 2021 campaign, *Hearing Care for ALL! Screen, Rehabilitate, Communicate*, GPODHH and FEPEDA challenge national health care systems around the world to integrate people-centred ear and hearing care within universal health coverage. Both parent-led groups call for governments to integrate Universal Neonatal Hearing Screening (UNHS) Systems through adoption of the 1-3-6 UNHS Goals:

- screening by 1 month
- identification by 3 months
- entry into early intervention by 6 months of age

Early identification is only the starting point for improved child outcomes. The benefits of neonatal hearing screening will not be realised unless children receive ongoing, affordable services, and support. Every child with hearing loss deserves early identification of their hearing loss, timely early intervention to support spoken or sign language development, according to the choice of their parents, and properly fitted listening devices, when appropriate. Evidence indicates these are key factors for minimizing the impact of hearing loss on a child's development, educational attainment, and socio-emotional wellbeing.

In addition, GPODHH and FEPEDA emphasize the centrality of the family in each child's life. In order to prosper, children need an enabling environment for their families and caregivers. Research proves the most important predictor of a child's success is the meaningful and effective involvement of his/her family. Formalized, measurable family support mechanism must be included in UNHS protocols and practices—and in the thought-leadership of early hearing detection and intervention systems.

GPODHH and FEPEDA champion a world where no child, young person, or adult with hearing loss is left behind.

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About

The Global Coalition of Parents of Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (GPODHH) is an international collaboration of parent groups dedicated to promoting improved systemic protocols and practices which encourage informed choice and the empowerment of families with a deaf or hard of hearing child throughout the world.

For more information: info@gpodhh.org

European Federation of Parents of Hearing Impaired Children (FEPEDA) is a non-governmental umbrella organisation set up to represent associations of parents and friends of Deaf and Hard of Hearing children at a European level. It promotes the equal rights of Deaf and Hard of Hearing children and young people and their families across Europe in order to contribute to a fully inclusive European Society, where Deaf and Hard of Hearing children, young people and their families have equality of opportunity and participation.

For more information: contact@fepeda.eu

GPODHH and FEPEDA are both supporters of the World Hearing Forum - a global network of stakeholders promoting ear and hearing care worldwide.

For more information: <https://www.who.int/activities/promoting-world-hearing-forum>