

**FIAPAS MANIFESTO**  
**International Day of Deaf People**  
**28th September 2013**

**BARRIER-FREE EDUCATION**  
***What Society must know about deaf people***

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The Spanish Constitution grants the State the power to decide about the design of a common education system for all citizens, acknowledging parents' rights to decide about the education model for their children.

Deaf students **require specific resources in terms of personnel** (speech therapists) **and technology**: hearing aids and implants, and technical aids (frequency modulation systems, induction loops and subtitles).

Something which can be provided in **an ordinary school environment in Spain, where they can share the classroom, activities and games with their fellow hearing students**. Therefore, although deaf students require specific resources, they do not need a unique education environment that is different to the other children of the same age.

**A new generation of deaf children**

It is true that **being deaf** makes it difficult to access hearing information; however, **nowadays this is not an impediment for acquiring the oral language in a family and social environment, nor for it to be the language of instruction in education**.

This is clearly possible thanks to the major qualitative changes in the education and social reality of deaf people: the Early Detection Programme for childhood deafness (approved in 2003 on a nationwide basis), the advances in hearing aids and implants, early intervention and specialised speech therapists, and support for families.

This has led to a **new generation** of deaf youngsters and children who can **communicate using the oral language and who use hearing aids**, which was unimaginable 10-15 years ago. Today this is a **reality which makes us reconsider, in this context of progress**, how all the spheres, especially education, must **meet the new emerging needs** of these children and their families.

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### Families

They TRUST that the **quality** announced in the new Education Law will reach all students, regardless of their personal circumstances, including deafness, with qualified support, without discrimination and with equal conditions as the other students.

They EXPECT not only the **application of the new legal framework in force**, since it will not make the principle of educational inclusion effective in itself, but they also DEMAND a **clear and express commitment** to these students, which means:

- ❑ updated training for teachers and speech therapists,
- ❑ early detection of educational needs,
- ❑ specific resources (staff, technology and teaching materials) and their continuity throughout the education stages, beyond the mandatory ones, in other fundamental ones such as childhood education, professional training, high school education and adult education; and
- ❑ subsidies and grants to enable families to pay for the extra expenses for deaf children.

The families of schoolchildren with hearing disabilities (who can communicate in the oral language and use hearing aids), like any other parent, and in accordance with the rights guaranteed by the Spanish legislation, WANT to be able to **choose the education model for their children, without this being determined by their deafness and without being directed towards special models or categories that they have not chosen.**

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- ❑ In Spain, there are more than one million people with hearing disabilities, of which 97% communicate in an oral language (INE, 2008).
  - ❑ 5% of newborn babies have a different type and degree of deafness.
  - ❑ 8% of the general population (nearly three million) cannot follow a conversation using a normal tone of voice.