



CHS's Response to rallies hosted on the International Day of Sign Language Rights

Background

The Canadian Association of the Deaf (CAD) is hosting rallies across Canada on September 28 in support of Sign Language and Education rights of Deaf children.

CHS encourages interested parties to visit International Day of Sign Language Rights at www.slr-canada.net for more information.

CHS's Response to the Issues

CHS believes that everyone has the right to acquire language. Language is an integral part of who we are, how we function, process information, express ourselves, learn, and communicate with others. To deny a deaf or hard of hearing child a language violates the child's fundamental right to engage in communication and learning.

CHS believes that all deaf and hard of hearing children have the right to acquire language – whether signed, spoken, or both – in the preschool years when language is most readily acquired. Barriers to exposure to language should be removed.

CHS believes that a child's language development should be monitored on an on-going basis and that changes should be made when necessary to enhance the child's progress and minimize language delay and harm in the development of the child. If there is no significant progress in language development, then alternatives must be considered and a transition plan created.

CHS believes that Deaf children and children with hearing loss have the right to a fully accessible education. Accessible quality education for deaf and hard of hearing students will set the stage for the rest of their lives, but too many barriers still exist. Educational institutions, boards and ministries are responsible for putting accommodations in place to ensure barrier-free access to quality education. Further, CHS believes that such accommodation must meet professional standards of quality, whether technical (FM systems) or human resources (qualified educational interpreters, captioners).

CHS believes that the Ontario provincial government must establish policies and standards for the quality of sign language used by teachers of deaf students, and policies and standards in ASL/LSQ curricula for deaf and hard of hearing students in Provincial Schools for Deaf students and in school boards. In 1993, the Ontario provincial government passed legislation making sign languages – American Sign Language (ASL) and Langue des signes québécoise (LSQ) – official

languages of instruction in Ontario. No policies or standards for ASL proficiency have been put into place despite Ministry of Education's ASL/LSQ regulations announced in July 2007.

Media

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