

**Exploring the pretend play
of children with hearing loss.**

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May 2012

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This dissertation is submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements governing
the award of the Master of Arts in Education

ABSTRACT

Exploring the pretend play of children with hearing loss.

Education in the early years inspires debate. Teachers aim to provide opportunities which encourage children to reach their full potential and to ascertain their achievements, the children are assessed. The setting for this small scale study is an integrated nursery for normally hearing children and children with hearing impairment (HI). The practitioners here are aware that current assessment tools are failing to show progress for the HI children. This research project explores whether the pretend play behaviours of HI children can assist the teachers in assessing their progress.

The impact of a hearing loss on a child's language acquisition is well documented. The preschoolers in this study have delayed language, the researcher felt it likely they would also exhibit delayed pretend play. The study focussed on three profoundly deaf preschool children. Observations took place over a three month period. Data displays the amount and extent of the play behaviours exhibited and phenomenological descriptions are presented.

Each of the children exhibited a normal, yet delayed pattern of play. These results are consistent with those of other studies. The results indicate that when assessed through play these children's progress can be highlighted. It is vital for this setting to incorporate interactive pretend play relating to everyday objects and activities.