



Abstract: Investigation sign language development, delay and disorder in deaf children

Prof. Gary Morgan, Ph.D.

Many studies have found serious and long-lasting effects of early language deprivation on linguistic and communicative competence in deaf children with hearing parents. However there has been little attempt to tease apart whether these problems are caused by delayed exposure, a language learning disorder or both. Establishing a research methodology which can reliably separate out effects of natural variation, delay and disorder is all about who is in the research team and what tools are available for assessment. Notwithstanding these challenges, it is important that a deaf child's language assessment can pinpoint what aspects of language need to be addressed so that any intervention is evidence based. Our studies indicate that the picture is a complex one, with both variation across children and differences between language disorder in the deaf and hearing populations.