



## **Bilingualism – American Sign Language and cued English**

*A Position Statement of the National Cued Speech Association*

The National Cued Speech Association (NCSA) recognizes advantages of bilingualism in English and American Sign Language (ASL) for most people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

The NCSA promotes the use of Cued Speech for the development of English language literacy for children who are deaf and hard of hearing. A visual understanding of the phonemic structure of English, as well as its vocabulary and syntax, is critically needed as the foundation for reading and writing before the child begins elementary school. The emphasis in preschool should therefore be on the acquisition of receptive and expressive English through Cued Speech, hereafter referred to as cued English. Cueing consistently and accurately allows these children to acquire English naturally on a daily basis.

Cued English and ASL are not mutually exclusive. They can be used at school, at home, at work, and in various social settings, depending on the user's preference. The use of Cued Speech provides direct, visual, and complete access to English, therefore protecting the sanctity of the English language. It also protects American Sign Language because ASL is a language that is distinct from English. By using cues for English and signs for ASL, the distinction between the two is made completely clear.

The NCSA invites and encourages a continuing dialogue on bilingualism with and among the various organizations advocating for people who are deaf and hard of hearing.

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