

# ROB LAST

Setting the Scene  
(Working with Babies and Toddlers)





# Setting The Scene

## Babies and Toddlers

Rob Last  
Vision Australia  
38 Hartnett Drive  
Seaford Vic 3198  
Australia  
email: [roblast@iinet.net.au](mailto:roblast@iinet.net.au)

**“For children who have CHARGE syndrome there is strong evidence that diagnosis and intervention before six months of age significantly improves outcomes in communication, behaviour and learning.”**

• Jan van Dijk, Arno de Kort

# The Early Months

- ❑ Major medical issues take precedence
- ❑ A large team of specialists become involved
- ❑ Life and death issues dominate
- ❑ Outcomes are unknown
- ❑ Major surgery's take place
- ❑ Bonding between child and parents is interrupted
- ❑ Medical procedures take place without warning or preparation

# Early Considerations

**Educators and therapists may assist in:**

- Positioning of the crib and people**
- Contrast**
- Lighting**
- Provision of communicative cues**
- Alerting to events**
- Early literacy**

# Early Communication

- Contentment**
- Distress**
- Wakeful**
- Sleepy**
- Pain**
- Comfort**
- Hunger**
- The first smile**

# Speech/Communication

**Communication includes:**

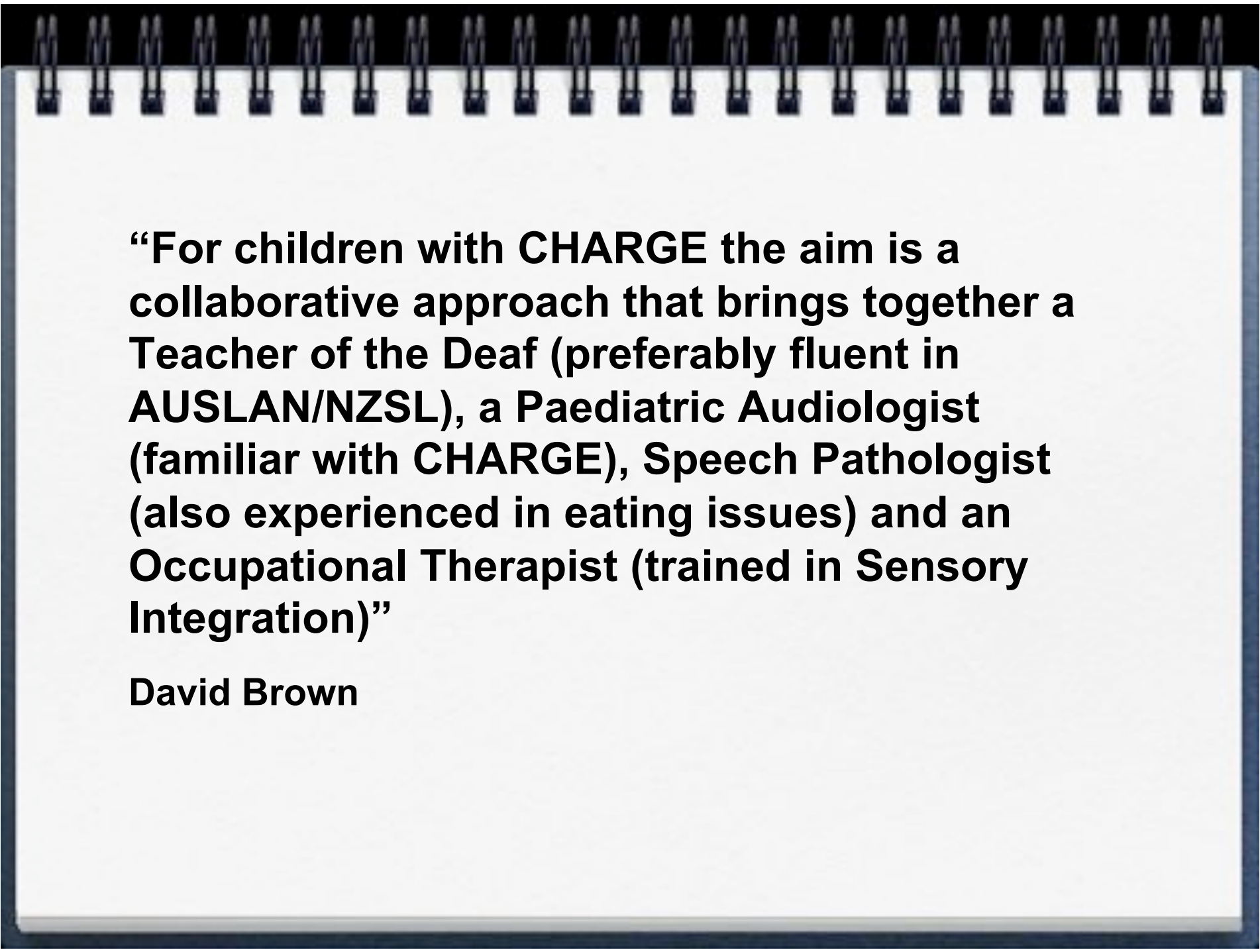
- body language**
- facial expression**
- touch cues**
- gestures**
- situational cues**
- and**
- speech**

## **Why the emphasis on early communication needs?**

- Most children with CHARGE are deaf or hard of hearing**
- All senses may be affected**
- In addition:**
  - Breathing difficulties**
  - Excessive secretions**
  - Facial palsy**
  - Cleft palate**
  - Eating issues**

# Communication Embraces

- Sign language - AUSLAN/NZSL**
- Speech with hearing aids**
- Speech with a cochlear implant**
- Speech assisted by BAHA (Bone Anchored Hearing Aid)**
- Visual programs**
- Signed English**
- Reading and writing**

A spiral-bound notebook with a white page and a dark blue cover. The spiral binding is visible at the top. The text is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

**“For children with CHARGE the aim is a collaborative approach that brings together a Teacher of the Deaf (preferably fluent in AUSLAN/NZSL), a Paediatric Audiologist (familiar with CHARGE), Speech Pathologist (also experienced in eating issues) and an Occupational Therapist (trained in Sensory Integration)”**

**David Brown**

# **What needs to happen**

- Early cues & prompts offered**
- Talking up close into each ear**
- Gestures and sign language introduced**
- Hearing aids introduced**
- Cochlear implant discussed and explored**
- More advanced sign language continues**
- Talking continues and amplification needs closely monitored**
- Literacy rich environment provided**

## **Strategies for learning a new language:**

- from Teachers of the Deaf**
- from signing dictionaries**
- from DVD's**
- from members of the deaf community**
- from CODA's (Children of Deaf Adults)**
- from attending classes/courses**
- from 'voice off' times**
- from child care people who are fluent in sign**
- from family week-ends with members from the deaf community**
- from exploring multiple opportunities to be immersed in sign**



# Communication and Behavior

- ❑ **Behaviour and Communication are inseparable**
- ❑ **Poor communication / high risk for behavior issues**
- ❑ **Acquiring symbolic language reduces the risk**

## **Communication and Gross Motor Development**

**“Through parent surveys it was found that children with CHARGE can achieve gross motor development milestones but do so at a slower rate than normal children. A correlation between gross motor development and communication abilities was also found.”**

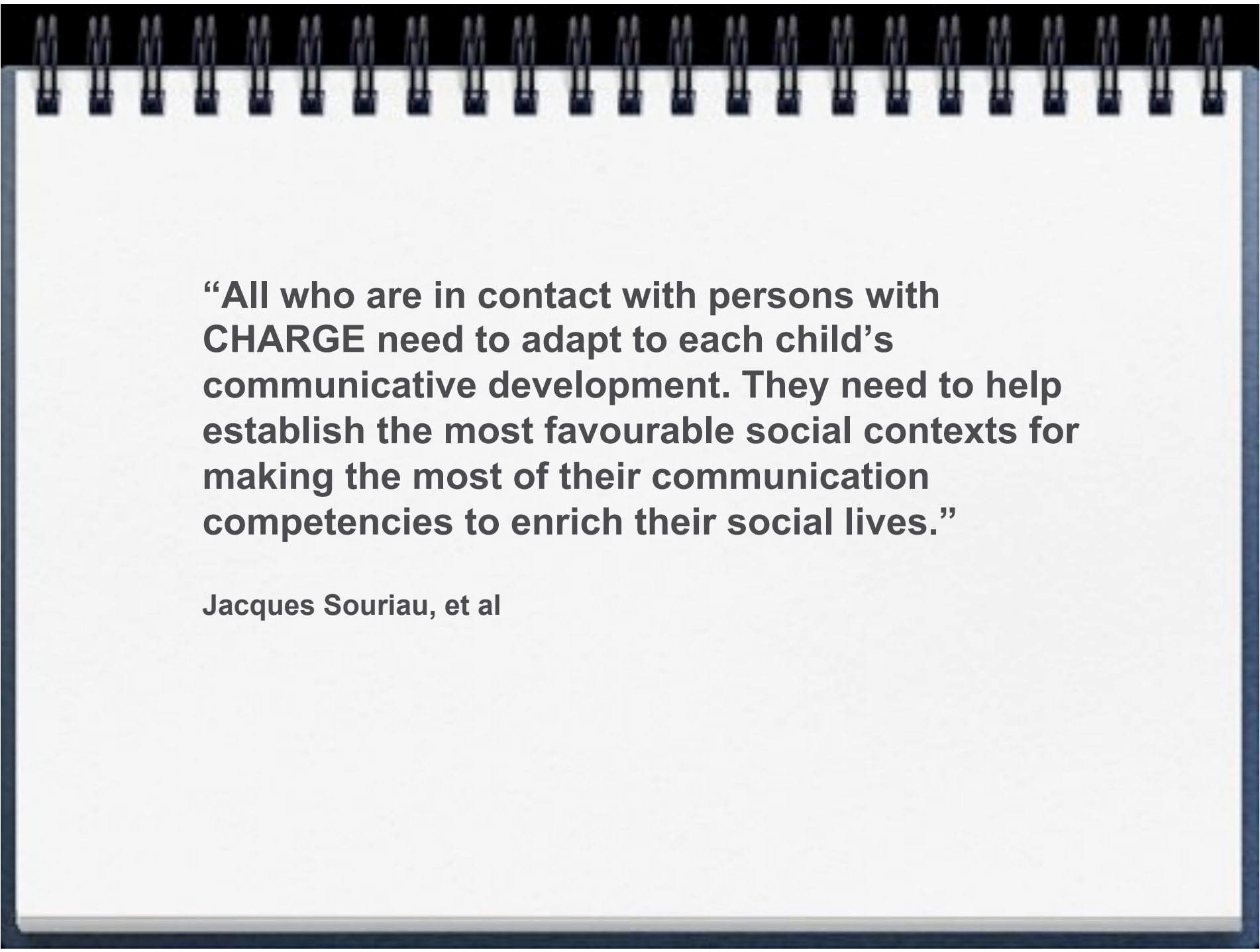
**James Thelin and Lori Travis**



# What then is the aim?

- ❑ **To provide a range of communications**
- ❑ **To ensure the communication is meaningful**
- ❑ **To provide an environment of immersion in a meaningful language**
- ❑ **To aim for communication competency which provides the opportunity and ability to express thoughts, ideas, emotions and humour i.e. symbolic language**



A spiral-bound notebook with a white page and a dark blue cover. The spiral binding is visible at the top. The text is centered on the page.

**“All who are in contact with persons with CHARGE need to adapt to each child’s communicative development. They need to help establish the most favourable social contexts for making the most of their communication competencies to enrich their social lives.”**

**Jacques Souriau, et al**

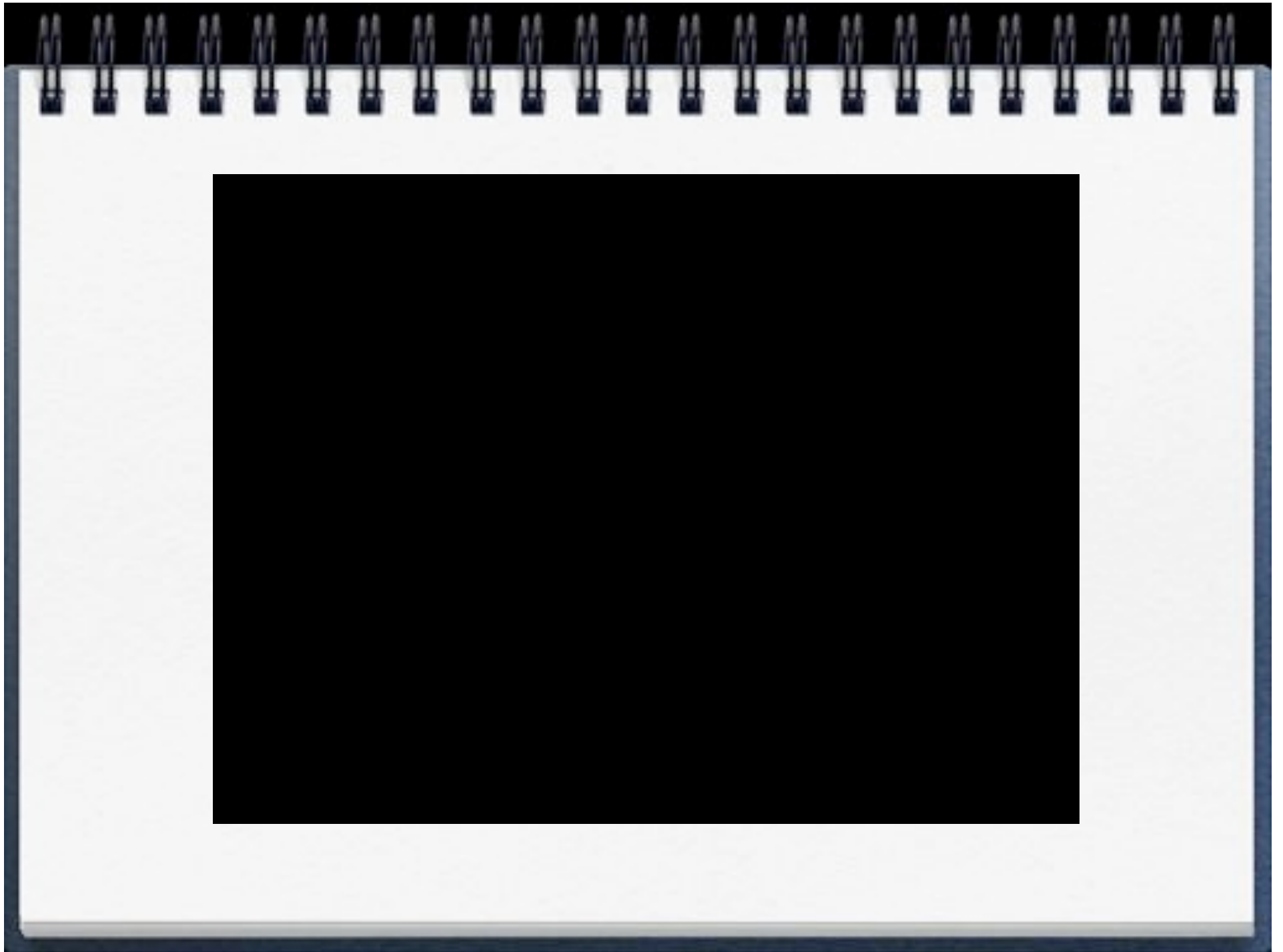
## **What is considered best practice:**

- for parents, extended family and professionals to embrace bilingualism**
- for the best amplification to be provided**
- to provide an environment of visual language and amplified speech**

# Outcomes

**“We have become a bilingual family. Sean is able to access both oral and signed communication. Both modes of communication are essential to his overall acquisition and use of language.”**

**Madelene Rich, Mother of Sean who has CHARGE**



# **‘Children with CHARGE Seven Years Later’**

## **The DVD**

- First filmed in 1993**
- Follow up in 2000**
- Further follow up in 2007**

**Available from Rob Last**

**email: [roblast@iinet.net.au](mailto:roblast@iinet.net.au)**

