

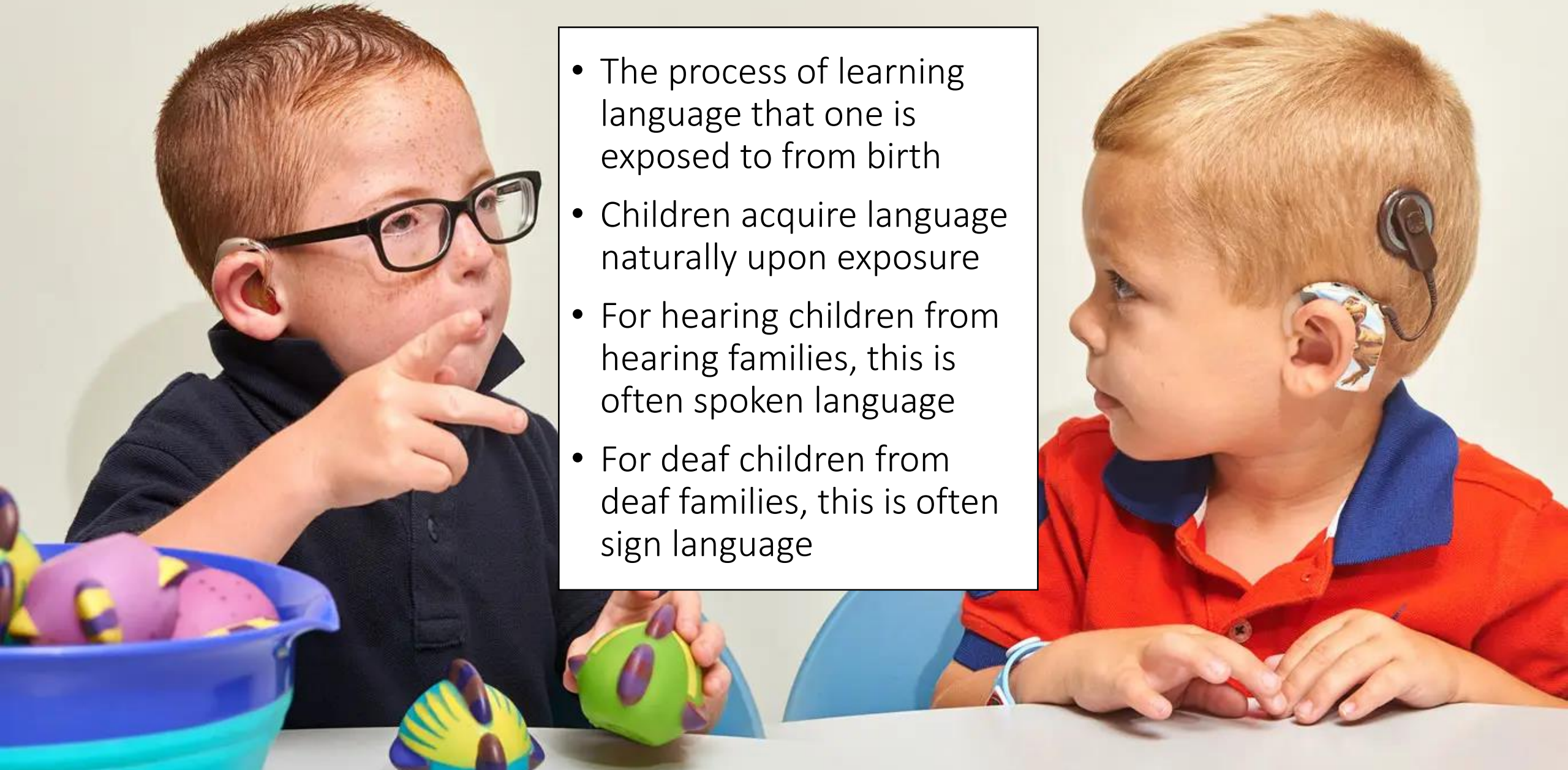
# Language Acquisition: Get it?

A close-up photograph of a woman with dark hair, wearing a light pink t-shirt, smiling and holding a young girl. The girl has curly brown hair and is wearing a pink and black leopard print top. She is pointing her right index finger towards the left. The background is a bright, out-of-focus indoor setting.

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# What is language acquisition?

- The process of learning language that one is exposed to from birth
- Children acquire language naturally upon exposure
- For hearing children from hearing families, this is often spoken language
- For deaf children from deaf families, this is often sign language



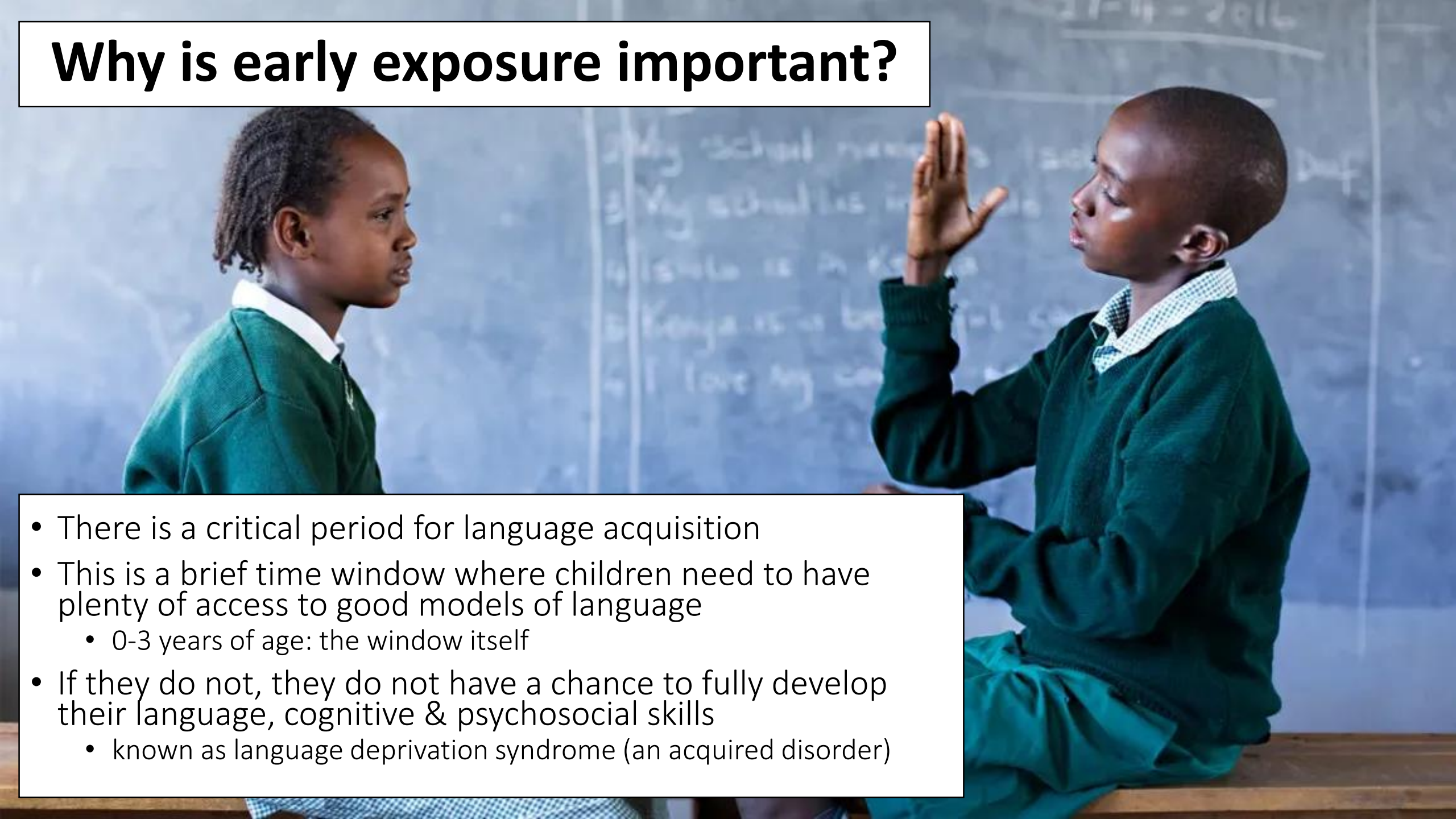


# How to successfully acquire language?

A close-up photograph of a child's head, showing the ear and hair, with a hand holding a leaf in the foreground. The hand has a ring on the ring finger. The background is blurred.


- Children need to have full access to language
- They need to be exposed to language early
  - 0 to 3 years of age
- The quality & quantity of language they are exposed to are both important

# Why is early exposure important?

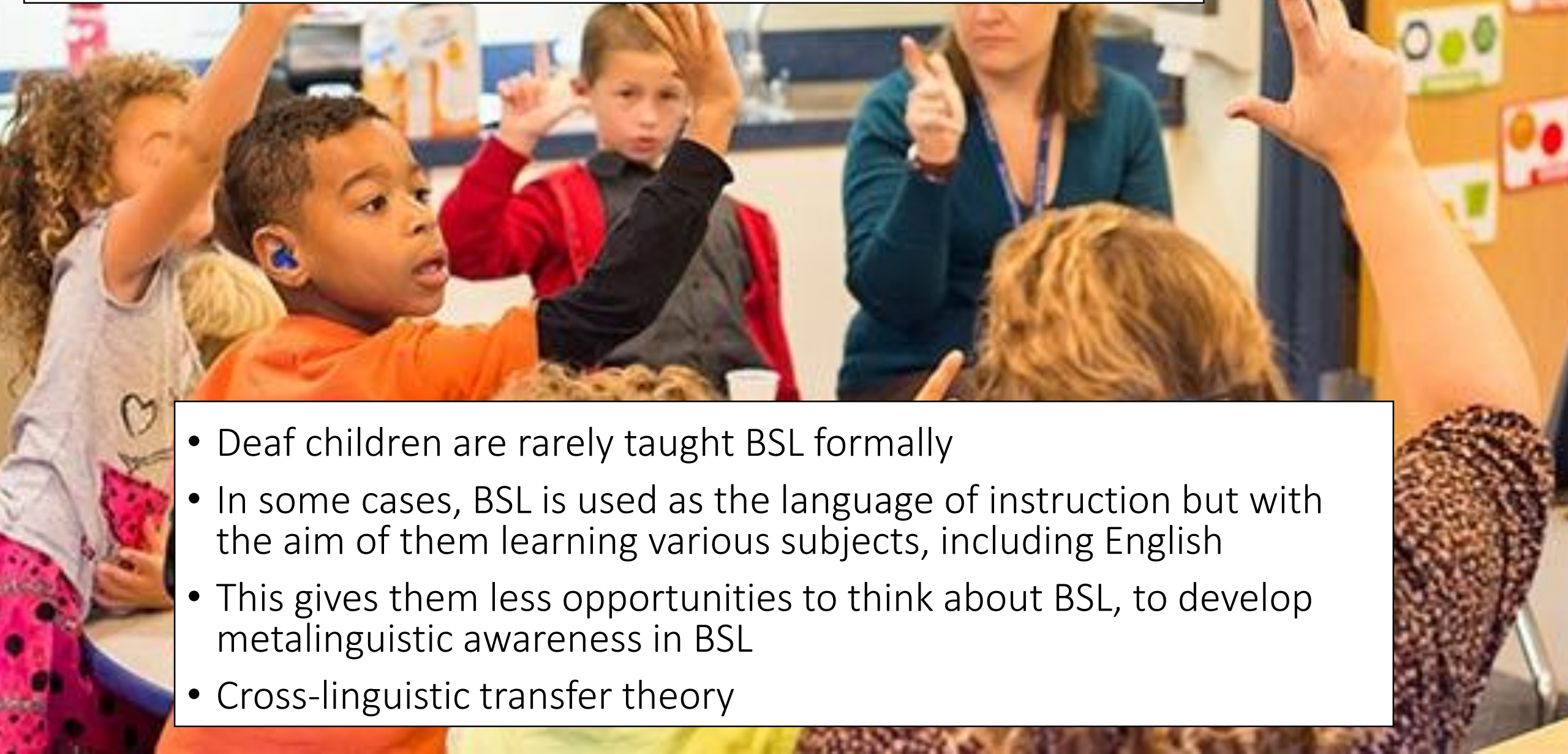
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- A photograph of two young children, a girl on the left and a boy on the right, both wearing green school uniforms. They are sitting on a wooden bench in front of a chalkboard. The girl is looking towards the boy, who is gesturing with his right hand raised. The chalkboard in the background has some faint, illegible writing on it.
- There is a critical period for language acquisition
  - This is a brief time window where children need to have plenty of access to good models of language
    - 0-3 years of age: the window itself
  - If they do not, they do not have a chance to fully develop their language, cognitive & psychosocial skills
    - known as language deprivation syndrome (an acquired disorder)



## Beyond 0-3 years of age

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- A young child with dark curly hair and a cochlear implant is shown in profile, blowing into a red toy trumpet. The child is wearing a white shirt. The background is blurred, showing an indoor setting with other people.
- Upon entering school, hearing children are taught language formally
  - In the U.K., this is mostly written English, which corresponds with their first language, spoken English
  - Being taught language formally enables children to develop metalinguistic awareness

# What about deaf children who use BSL?



- Deaf children are rarely taught BSL formally
- In some cases, BSL is used as the language of instruction but with the aim of them learning various subjects, including English
- This gives them less opportunities to think about BSL, to develop metalinguistic awareness in BSL
- Cross-linguistic transfer theory





# Why is the BSL curriculum important for deaf children?

- It enables them to develop their BSL skills, which includes;
  - Vocabulary
  - Grammar
  - Conversation
  - Storytelling
- For deaf children
  - Who have had early access to language
  - Who are language deprived

# Crucially, for deaf children...

- BSL enables them full access to language
- They then can use this language as a medium to;
  - To access information
    - fund of knowledge
  - To develop cognitive skills
    - thinking, planning, reasoning etc.
  - To develop psychosocial skills
    - empathy, emotional literacy, social interaction etc.
- They can also use their BSL knowledge to learn English





# Why is the BSL curriculum important for hearing children?

- It provides them with an opportunity to learn a new language
- To develop metalinguistic awareness & benefit from cross-linguistic transfer
- It enables them to communicate with deaf peers who sign in BSL



# Thank you for your time!

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