



**Presentation Title: Making space for intuitive early communication**

**Keynote Presenters: Evelien Dirks and Hannah Lumby**

**Abstract:**

Every parent takes a little time to get to know their new baby. Time well spent gazing at their newborn, stroking their skin and intuitively smiling and chatting. These early **connections** between parents and their baby form a bond which is the foundation for children to develop. When a parent finds out their baby is deaf or hard of hearing, they may feel unsure about how to **communicate** with their child and lose confidence in their own expertise.

Hannah will share her experience of the months after finding out that her newborn had hearing loss. Wanting to do the best for her daughter, she ensured they were using hearing aids consistently and applying the new communication techniques she was learning. As the months passed however, she noticed something more important was missing. Hannah will share her personal story of going back to basics and connecting more fully with her baby as a result. Evelien will present a project that aims to strengthen parents' trust in their intuitive interacting skills. Video-feedback techniques are used to discover with parents how they already connect instinctively with their deaf or hard-of-hearing baby.

The **collaboration** between Hannah as a parent and Evelien as a researcher will provide practical insights into how professionals can support families to recognise their instinctive interacting skills, highlight what parents are already doing well, and most importantly enjoy their baby.