

Showing the Need, Making the Case, Demonstrating Your Unique Expertise

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Objectives:

- Discuss why we need to advocate for appropriate assessment and services
- Share legal underpinnings requiring students with hearing loss to receive equal access to communication
- Describe inservicing steps to get across the needs of students with hearing loss to teachers, parents, school staff
- Clarify the specific expertise of DHH professionals as part of a team that supports the student with hearing loss

Most school teams don't deal with DHH students very often 80% of schools that have a child with hearing loss on an IEP have only 1 or 2 students; 20% of schools with children with hearing loss have 3 or more students. Mitchell, R., & Karchmer, M. (2006). Demographics of deaf education: More students in more places. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 151(2), 95-104.

Hearing loss is rare – only 1% of kids with IEPs have hearing loss as the basis of learning needs

If you've seen one child with hearing loss you've seen one child with hearing loss! There are some vulnerabilities in common but actual learning issues can be very different, especially with variations in early ID & early intervention outcomes.

Hearing loss looks like other learning issues. Seems similar, but not the same!

"When you hear hoof beats, they are usually horses and not zebras."

Hearing loss is not a disorder, like LD or language disorders. Hearing loss is not an attention disorder, like ADHD or ASD.

Hearing loss is not a cognitive disorder, but academic delays and some functional classroom issues are common. Hearing loss can LOOK like every one of these issues.

Classroom Teacher Study: half of teachers thought hearing loss and academic problems were not linked.

Teachers accused students of daydreaming because they participated inconsistently. Study by Ross, Brackett, and Maxon 1991

But his speech is great!!! Age appropriate speech and language at age 3 is a triumph of the hard work and dedication of the family. A good start does not **inoculate** a child from developing learning gaps in the future. The listening/communication environment birth-3 is very different from a school setting: Noise level, Activity level, Expectations for interaction, Expectations for attention/behavior.

Hearing Loss is not the same as other Special Education populations. Hearing loss is an ACCESS Issue creating barriers to learning in the typical classroom and impacting social interactions. This *invisible* barrier is why it is necessary to consider functional performance in the classroom across situations. CUMULATIVE learning gaps due to incidental learning/overhearing deficits. Hard of hearing students are often ignored or their needs are minimized because they are not 'Deaf enough.'

The name of the game is access: Hidden Barriers = Noise and distance is just as much a barrier to a student with hearing loss as a narrow doorway is to a student in a wheelchair. ADHD medication helps children with this disorder to focus and therefore function in the classroom. Distance and noise is every bit as much of an impediment to student focus as asking a child with ADHD to perform well without medication.

New Title II ADA Policy Clarification Requires schools to ENSURE that communication is as effective for students with hearing loss as peers. Effective communication is provided through appropriate auxiliary aids and services

"affording an equal opportunity to obtain the same result, to gain the same benefit, or to reach the same level of achievement as that provided by others" and "to participate in and enjoy the benefits of the district's services, programs and activities" November 14, 2014 DOE/DOJ Policy Clarification <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-effective-communication-201411.pdf>

Applies to all children with a known hearing loss. Schools must comply; puts the onus on the schools. Auxiliary aids and services must be provided in a timely manner – as soon as requested; don't wait for the IEP/evaluation process to be completed. Schools must honor the individual's choice UNLESS they can prove that an alternative is as effective as that provided to students without disabilities. Applies to ALL students with hearing loss, not just those who qualify for IEPs or who have 504 Plans. Applies to perceiving peer-to-peer communication, not just teacher instruction

There is an additional focus for DHH during assessment considerations. Not just a question of identifying areas of educational performance that are adversely effected (educational, not academic performance). The clarification by ADA has shifted the focus to: Can the student communicate as effectively as peers? (perceive verbal instruction & class peers) What is

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needed to ensure that the hearing loss will not interfere with effective understanding in class, thereby limiting the students' opportunity to reach the same level of achievement as peers without hearing loss? **We cannot just rely on grades for this info.**

Case Law Support

Summary – child with FM on 504 Plan; FM was nonfunctional for months. The school district explained to OCR, that since the student had continued to maintain “A” and “B” grades while the FM device was unavailable, they felt he was not affected by the district’s failure to follow his 504 Plan. The Office for Civil Rights, however, agreed with the student’s mother that his maintenance of good grades was due to his own diligence. Thus, the OCR determined the district’s failure to implement the 504 Plan and failure to implement mitigating measures denied the student a free appropriate public education and violated 504. **So again, grades cannot be used as a measure of access.**

Access / Auxiliary Aids and Services: Refer to handouts <http://successforkidswithhearingloss.com/access-ada>

- *Accessibility Considerations: What Auxiliary Aids and Services are Needed to Ensure Effective Communication?*
- *The Cascading Impact of Hearing Loss on Access to School Communication*
- *Accessibility Considerations Worksheet for Students with Hearing Loss*

So, what we know... Growing up with a hearing loss results in students being at risk for listening, language, social issues. The hearing loss is an access issue that interferes with effective communication in the classroom. Access to teacher instruction and access to peer-to-peer communication both must be considered. Degree of access issues need to be identified and accommodations provided, regardless of grades. If you’ve seen one kid with hearing loss, you’ve seen one kid with hearing loss. Need to estimate access to classroom communication. We need to inform others of the unique issues due to hearing loss.

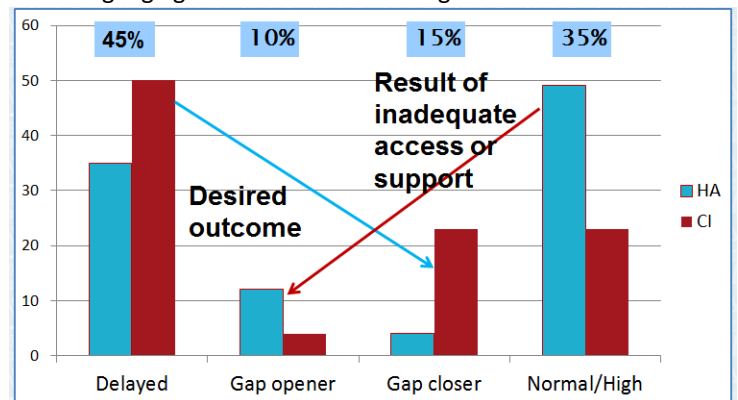
“Language within age expectations” Yoshinaga-Itano 2000 research on impact of EI: 72 Infants with hearing loss identified before 6 months were matched with 78 infants with hearing loss identified after 6 months. Result: early identified had mean language quotient of 84. **Improved, but not ‘fixed.’**

EI ‘successes’ vulnerable to issues. Research by [Susan Nitttrour, PhD](#). Extensive and sensitive test instruments. On measures of auditory comprehension, children with hearing loss who had EI averaged 86-88, or about -1SD. Finding of ‘low average’ has been documented in a variety of research studies. (*Marshall & Spencer; Evidence-Based Practice*). A lot of language learning occurs after starting school including development of phonological awareness skills until age 12 and syntactic learning from ages 5-10. Consistent finding across research is that hearing loss causes no learning ‘disorder’ – cognition is fine. Sensory input issues that impact memory/storage which delays development of phonological, grammatical, working memory, expressive vocabulary skills, pragmatics and listening and reading comprehension.

Impact of HL over time Data from Christi Yoshinaga-Itano, Colorado. Language growth of 135 children age 4-7. Children were cognitively normal from English speaking families with hearing parents. Median age of ID – 3 months, EI start – 8 months.

Language assessed 3-4 times from 48-84 months of age. Both cochlear implant users and hearing aid users (mild – severe/profound). Results: children fell into one of 4 groups.

Findings: We tend to be very careful when we are counseling parents about not being concerned about delays in birth – 3 years because ‘they will catch up.’ Reality is most kids DON’T catch up by age 7. It is often assumed that a student who has no delays at school entry will continue to be okay. Reality is that we cannot assume that this is true – about 10% ‘slip’ by age 7. Experience tells us that many normal/high performers will develop gaps as linguistic complexity and expectations increase grade 3+.



What often happens... Student with hearing loss is identified and is referred for possible evaluation. Team looks at grades. Ask the classroom teacher: “His speech is good. He seems to hear everything I say.” Decision to not move forward with evaluation. This approach may be valid for children with learning disorders. Educational performance for DHH needs to consider additional areas. Access to communication and the vulnerabilities caused by HL cannot be judged with the same ruler.

Eligibility: Children with hearing loss have accessibility barriers to verbal instruction and classroom communication. The question is not IF they need support, the question is HOW MUCH support is needed for the student to benefit from the regular education

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setting. Will she require “specially designed instruction”? or Can her needs be met with the basic accommodations of a 504 Plan? This decision will be based on collected data (academic and FUNCTIONAL), and should not be ruled by ‘we’ve always done it this way’ or by history with one or more communication modes.

Evaluation requires functional + academic : §300.304(b)(1) Use a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant information about the child, §300.304(b)(2) Not use any single measure or assessment as the sole criterion §300.304(c)(2) include assessments tailored to assess specific areas of educational need. Each State must ensure that FAPE is available, even though the child has not failed a course or grade. (CFR Section 300.101). The group determining the eligibility must make an individual determination as to whether, notwithstanding the child’s progress in a course or grade, he or she needs or continues to need special education and related services.” (CFR Section 300.101). **Adverse educational effect is not synonymous with academic delays. Educational performance based on unique needs must be taken into account.**

Areas of learning most likely to be impacted by hearing loss:

- Inability to completely perceive speech sounds in typical school conditions – broad impact!
 - Vocabulary gaps due to decreased ability to overhear incidental language
 - Understanding syntax rules (can't hear /s/ so don't understand plurals, possessives)
 - Early reading (phonology/phonemic awareness issues related to not distinctly hearing speech sounds)
 - Understanding intent/emotions of others
 - Viewing information from different perspectives
 - Immature listening skills (discrimination of sounds to comprehension of conversation or verbal instruction)
 - Language processing issues due to fragmented hearing, vocabulary gaps, syntax, listening rate, etc.
 - Social language use (socially awkward due to delays in pragmatic language development)
 - Periodic inattention due to listening fatigue and gaps in understanding
 - Passive or immature skills in responding when they do not understand what was said
 - Understanding group discussions or participating in small group work due to distance/noise
- 



Can his needs be addressed by the LD/SpEd teacher? Resource Teacher (LD/SpEd) potential issues:

Lack of experience working with HL due to low incidence. Tend to see hearing aids/FM as a cure all. Lack of understanding:

- Difference between the sense of hearing and skill of listening
- How language develops, interference by HL and how to break down to teach to gaps
- Pragmatic language and link to social skills
- Why this kid with HL doesn't learn like their last kids with HL
- Classroom accommodations related to hearing loss needs
- Link between decreased incidental language exposure and behavior. ETC!

Advocate for Inclusion of the DHHT! Refer to handout: *Why Involve the Teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing on the Assessment Team and the IEP?*

Strut Your STUFF! “Bring to the table” information in addition to grades and teacher impressions

Focus on how the hearing loss impacts (or would impact) performance in a school setting.

Make sense of the audiogram (“I don’t care about the graph. I want to know what it means in my classroom.”)

Relate to behavior in the classroom. Relate to specific areas of academic learning: i.e., reading comprehension.

Describe the impact of the hearing loss – not the audiogram:

Relationship of Hearing Loss to Listening and Learning Needs

<http://successforkidswithhearingloss.com/relationship-hl-listen-learn>

Use visual analogies: Vision – show a word (airplane) in a very small font on your computer (9 pt) and then a large font as though glasses were provided (72 pt).

Hearing – show a fragmented word in small font and then again in large font.



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Talk about missing puzzle pieces. Refer to handout: *Impact of Hearing Loss on Listening Comprehension Examples*. You will need to black out 'pieces' of words to represent missing speech discrimination percentage points (i.e., word endings, brief words, high frequency speech sounds) per your knowledge of the child's hearing loss.

Handout: Puzzle Piece fill in demonstration using results of Functional Listening Evaluation.

MAKE THE INVISIBLE – REAL! EXPERIENCING HEARING LOSS WILL BE REMEMBERED – WHAT YOU SAY OR WHAT IS ON YOUR HANDOUTS PROBABLY WON'T. Experience is the best teacher. Simulations/Demos:

<http://successforkidswithhearingloss.com/demonstrations>

Emotional Impact of Hearing Loss: *"They talk fast – I can't listen fast."*

Compare to listening to someone with an unfamiliar accent – especially when the person is talking fast or there is a bit of noise. The "listening lag".... Extra work! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ijr9IU2J2Wk>

Handy Hearing Loss Simulator- Quick to do! Plugged ear hearing loss *Mother's Aprons* passage and question is on *Teacher Tools*. Read a passage and then "play teacher" and ask questions. Demo back turned, roaming, effects of distance/noise. Any material can be read and specific questions asked. "Even with hearing aids or cochlear implants students typically hear worse than this." Compare to "plugged ear loss": 250 Hz/25 dB, 500/25 dB, 1000/20 dB, 2000/20 dB, 4000 Hz/15 dB.

Making the Invisible Real (review)

1. The team/teacher experiences hearing loss.
2. Ask how they/she felt when experiencing the hearing loss.
3. Relate to potential learning behaviors. What about student feelings?
4. Share your observations: Classroom observation, Review of collected information/ test results, Teacher checklists (i.e., CHILD, SIFTERS, LIFE Teacher Appraisal – <http://successforkidswithhearingloss.com/tests>)

Other areas? Shown: Listening Comprehension Test – 2, Phonological Awareness Test – 2, Test of Auditory Processing Skills – 3, Basic Reading Inventory, Social-Emotional Evaluation/Assessment Measure, Social Language Development Test – Elementary.

Make the Case!

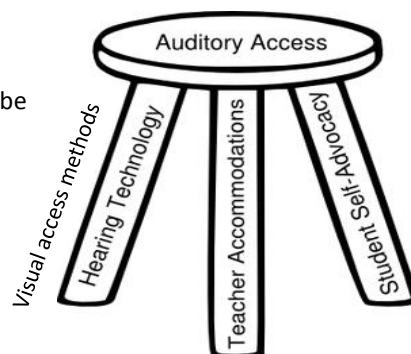
1. **Provide visual simulations of the impact of hearing loss**
2. **Share information about impact of hearing loss on speech perception – fragmented hearing**
 - Functional Listening Evaluation
 - LIFE-R or CHILD results
 - Observation
3. **Share information on impact of hearing loss on issues related to functioning in the classroom**
 - SIFTER
 - Pragmatic Language
 - Listening Comprehension
 - Reading, etc.

Classroom Communication Access

GET ACROSS THE IMPORTANCE OF THE 3-LEGGED STOOL:

What the classroom teacher and the itinerant do are both necessary if the student is to be able to fully participate as effectively as the typically hearing students.

STRUT YOUR STUFF Refer to handout: *Necessary Supports Worksheet*
Relate what YOU do to the challenges identified



Thanks for Making the Case, Showing the Need, Strutting your Stuff!