

An Introduction to Commonly Used Checklists*

There are a number of checklists that have been a staple in providing support to students with hearing loss by educational audiologists and itinerant teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing. The following are descriptions by a teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing and by an educational audiologist that may be beneficial for readers to understand how these checklists can be useful in routine practice.

The Children's Home Inventory of Listening Difficulty (C.H.I.L.D.)

Teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing: *"I have used the CHILD to get more information from a parent if I am consulting in the home with the family of a school-aged child. It is used to obtain their thoughts about how their child performs in different listening conditions. Its uses are two-fold: Filling out the form helps the family increase their awareness of the impact of the hearing loss on listening in a variety of conditions. Secondly, it provides a natural point of departure for discussion regarding how the family can cope or make changes to achieve a more effective home listening environment. I have also used the CHILD as part of a new referral evaluation and a three-year re-evaluation. For elementary and middle school children, I usually have the parent fill out the parent version of the form. Students who are in grades 4 or 5 and above fill out the child version of the form. If the student is not a good reader but is mature enough to make a good estimate of his or her abilities, I will read the situations to him or her. It is usually interesting to compare the parent's perception and the child's perception of how the child is coping in a variety of listening conditions. I sometimes do coping groups with the student who has a hearing loss and two of his or her friends. The situations from the CHILD and their impact can be part of the group discussion."*

Screening Instrument For Targeting Educational Risk (S.I.F.T.E.R)

3 SIFTER Levels: Preschool, Elementary and Secondary levels

Teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing: *"I think it is great that there are three levels of the SIFTER. When a school district refers a student who has just been identified as having a hearing loss, I first take a look at the audiogram. If the student's name has not been reported as having difficulty in his or her classes, I may first give the appropriate SIFTER form to the teachers (with the parent's permission) to use as a screening along with doing an observation to see if we need to go further in testing. I use the SIFTER mostly as part of a new referral evaluation in which I would be doing the functional listening assessment, speech, speechreading, and sometimes language assessment along with gathering information regarding written language. I have also used the SIFTER as part of a battery of tools to monitor how a child is doing in the mainstream. If the child's scores indicate the "at-risk" range, I look at the need for more accommodations, including the possible need for an FM system or a change in services. When the SIFTER is used as part of a three-year re-evaluation, I am usually looking at the need for specific accommodations such as an FM system. If the general education teachers fill out the form, it is beneficial to compare the subject areas because often, a student may be doing well in one subject area but not another. At that point, I try to facilitate discussion with the teachers to determine if it is the student's knowledge of the content area, response to the teaching style, student need for additional accommodations, or a combination. I will also compare the SIFTER categories to determine if there are more needs in one area, such as communication as compared with another, such as school behavior. I really find the SIFTER to be beneficial as part of several tools used during the functional assessment process."*

Educational Audiologist: *"As an educational audiologist this is a useful tool for students who may be suspected of having listening and auditory comprehension difficulties in the classroom. One use is in the RTI (Response to Intervention) process when a teacher or a team of teacher suspects that a student has listening/attention problems. If the student is found to have difficulties using the SIFTER, an intervention may*

be to try a classroom audio distribution system, using visual support to supplement auditory information, moving their seat to a less distracting place in the classroom, or any other RTI interventions. If a student is being referred for auditory processing testing, the SIFTER is a useful tool to give the classroom teacher(s) to gauge how the student compares to his peers in the classroom setting. The SIFTER is another tool that can be used when looking at the comprehensive battery of tests that may be performed to assess auditory processing. The SIFTER is also a valuable tool to use for students who have been diagnosed with any type and degree of hearing loss. Students who have mild, fluctuating hearing loss due to ear infections and those who have a profound hearing loss using cochlear implants may have success and difficulties in the classroom. By collecting teacher input, using a consistent tool, from year to year, the educational team is able to compare and analyze interventions and accommodations that work/do not work to enhance the learning experience for the student with hearing loss.”

Listening Inventory For Education (revised 2011) (L.I.F.E.-R.)

Student LIFE and Teacher LIFE versions

Teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing: “I give the Teacher LIFE form to teachers after a student has received hearing aids or an FM system. I usually allow the student to use the new hearing aids or FM for two weeks before giving teachers the form as a post-test, especially for the FM system. Since the economy is so difficult, districts are not always sure if they want to purchase expensive equipment; therefore, it is helpful to have the Teacher LIFE results as an indication that the equipment is making a difference. The suggestions for improving classroom listening are helpful as an addition to the materials that I give the general education teachers. I usually do an in-service with the student's teachers regarding the impact of the hearing loss as well as the use of the amplification. It could be helpful to provide the suggested accommodations from the LIFE after reviewing the Student LIFE form with the teachers. The Student LIFE is also helpful in reinforcing a student's development of self-advocacy. When filling out the form, the student can become more aware of the situations that are difficult or easy and help in their own decision making process regarding the use of an FM system, wearing hearing aids and when to advocate for accommodations for different classes.”

Educational Audiologist: “The LIFE is a valuable tool to use to gain input from both the student and the teacher. As an educational audiologist, this is one of my favorite tools to use when assessing the benefit of classroom audio distribution systems, personal FM systems, and performance of new hearing aids for students. The student version of the LIFE gives the audiologist or other professional the opportunity to discuss and expand on difficult listening situations and how the student may want to intervene. By doing the Student LIFE before starting a classroom listening device trial period, the student as well as the educational team can find out how the student feels he hears and understands in the classroom. Once the device has been used for a few weeks, the Student LIFE can be performed again to document if it was effective. The student input, especially when the Student LIFE shows situations improve to "easy or mostly easy" carry the most weight for documentation of need to purchase the equipment. When the student sees on paper that the classroom listening device is making listening in the classroom easier, he is an integral part of the educational team and more likely to use the equipment consistently and responsibly. The Teacher LIFE is also a valuable tool and provides much needed documentation when the school is deciding whether or not to purchase the equipment. As an educational audiologist, I find it important to go over the situations at the same time that you are introducing the equipment that will be on trial. Teachers who have 25-30 students in the class need some concrete examples of what to look for in order to rate the trial period and the LIFE gives the teacher practical, everyday learning situations with which to evaluate the student.”

* Sincere appreciation is expressed to the following for providing input to this introduction:

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