

Your Student with Hearing Loss

Student: _____ Grade: _____ Teacher: _____ Date: _____

School: _____ Contacted by: _____

Learning with a Hearing Loss – Things for the Teacher to Know and Understand

1. Hearing aids and/or cochlear implants do not restore normal hearing. Students who use hearing aids may not be able to hear all of the sounds of speech even when it is quiet and the speaker is close by.
2. The student will almost always miss some of what is said in the classroom if there is ANY background noise.
3. Hearing aids or cochlear implants allow most students to perceive speech occurring **within a distance 3-6 feet**. Imagine a transparent bubble over the student that is 6 feet in diameter. Any speech from farther away will likely be 'heard' but not all of the parts of speech will be perceived, like putting a puzzle together with missing pieces.

In the classroom in this photo the student with hearing loss (who everyone is looking at) would be able to hear students right in front of him. The teacher's voice would likely be heard but only at a soft loudness. Even teachers who speak loudly cannot make up for the effect of the hearing loss when the child is listening at a distance of more than arm's length or a bit farther.



4. You will be surprised sometimes to observe the student being able to 'hear' even when you think he or she could not have done so. Consider the brief children's story in the yellow box. You can clearly read the words but endings are missing and the words are not as distinct so it takes extra time and effort to figure out the story, even if you are reading it carefully. This visual simulation is similar to the listening ability of a child with well-fit hearing aids (25 dB reduction in sound). The small font size represents that sound is perceived more quietly than it is for typically hearing children. Your student may 'hear' but not understand what was said completely because pieces are missing and it takes extra effort to do figure it out. Language delays make this even more challenging.
5. Your student with hearing loss may sometimes look as though he is not paying attention. What is probably happening is that he is working hard to listen and figure out what is being said for a period of time and then taking a bit of a listening break. Think about what you would do if you had to read letters this small all day. You could do it, but you would likely take frequent breaks, closing your eyes for a bit.
6. The more effort spent listening, the fewer cognitive resources will be available for understanding and integrating new information into what is already known. Your student with hearing loss may need to hear something 5 times to 'get it' when peers may only need 1-3 times.
7. Using an FM system is like having your voice a few inches from the student's ear. This helps overcome the effects of distance and noise, making your voice consistently able to hear. As shown by the story, the student may still miss some speech sounds and have to work harder to understand, even with the FM. Pass the mic during discussion.
8. Answers from class peers, quick conversations, jokes and many social interchanges between peers are often not able to be heard completely by the student with hearing loss. Assume that anytime a class peer talks that the student with hearing loss will NOT be able to hear or understand what was said, unless the peer is next to him.

*Won upon a time a itty
mow when to vit a untry
mow. The untry mow
live in a feel. EEE wuz lad
to shee hi zittyfren.
A too my ran abowda
feel and lay unt noo.*



What you can do: Repeat key points; rephrase using different words. Use the FM, including passing the microphone. Set up a signal so the student can let you know when he's struggling. Identify a buddy that can repeat a page number or simple instruction but only as necessary - the student needs to learn to advocate for himself! Support better peer-to-peer communication by keeping the noise down. Help him fit in – hearing devices are like little computers and high tech phones rolled into one (cool!). Encourage him to become his own hearing tech specialist. Explain idioms, multiple meaning words, vocabulary – much of the time these are learned by overhearing others use it in daily conversations.

Be in frequent contact with the person who specializes in working with students with hearing loss _____