

## Evidence-Based Decision-Making for Access Accommodations for Students with Hearing Loss

Title II of the ADA requires that schools ensure that communication is as effective for students with hearing loss as it is for peers to afford an equal opportunity to reach the same level of achievement provided to others. This includes assessment of level of communication effectiveness/needs and reassessment of effectiveness of communication regularly as a situation changes. For more information on ADA requirements for schools go to [Frequently Asked Questions on Effective Communication for Students with Hearing, Vision, or Speech Disabilities in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools](#)

**Evidence-based decision-making regarding the level of effectiveness of communication is based on gathering functional performance data generated by formal or informal assessments, observation and student interview. Communication effectiveness needs to be reconsidered as situations change.**

**What is this student's level of communication effectiveness during the following situations?**

**Teacher instruction:** necessary to process extensive, important and complex information.

Grades or progress on curriculum-based measures are not specific enough to determine the level of communication effectiveness. Data examples: Results of Functional Listening Evaluation (with and without amplification, hearing assistance technology), fine auditory discrimination measure, listening comprehension testing, auditory memory as a precursor to listening comprehension, language processing evaluations, spot classroom comprehension checks, Listening Inventory For Education Student Appraisal, After LIFE self-advocacy strategy use appraisal, indication of function in various communicative situations per family completion of the Children's Home Inventory of Listening Difficulties.

**Class discussion:** necessary to process brief communication, varying complexity; must effectively receive both question and peer responses.

Data examples: comprehension questions as part of a student interview following class discussion, student data collection (i.e., note with hash marks for each student/teacher exchange and an indication of if each was understood), After LIFE self-advocacy strategy use appraisal, etc. Asking student "Did you understand?" does not constitute gathering evidence for how effectively the student is able to access communication during class discussion.

**Small group learning:** necessary to process student discussion from near distance typically in the presence of noise; information shared builds on contributions by all group members as a vehicle for completing a specific learning goal.

Data examples: Group members rate each other for level of contribution to group performance, including ratings of how well each group member understood the point of what other members said; record group discussion (i.e., via a Smart Phone) and review as part of an interview with the student to gather data about how effectively he or she understood the comments of peers; observe student use of self-advocacy skills to obtain clarification if information was not understood, etc. Asking student "Did you understand?" does not constitute gathering evidence for how effectively the student is able to access communication during small group learning activities.

**Learning via media (computers, television, videos, SmartBoard, etc.):** May include access to high stakes testing with auditory components, audio/video segments to enhance learning to communicate important or complex information.

Data examples: Listening comprehension check of presented material without visual supports as compared to a small number of typical class peers. Reliance on visual supports to understand information (i.e., captioning). Ability to connect hearing devices to technology to receive high fidelity audio input. Interfacing hearing devices with media can often result in audio interference. It cannot be assumed that media interface is working well without assessment.

**School announcements:** specific information with social elements important for self-concept and social acceptance.

Data examples: comprehension spot check in class; student writes down each item covered in the announcement for a specified number of days and the result is checked for accuracy. Asking student "Did you understand?" does not constitute gathering evidence for how effectively the student is able to access communication during school announcements.

**School assemblies:** specific, sometimes complex, information, often with social elements.

Data examples: Student is asked to repeat the key information presented during the school assembly along with parts of the information presented that he felt he missed receiving information.

**Physical education and/or school-related sports activities:** specific instructions, call-out plays during activity, possibly peer-to-peer communication.

Data example: teacher observation of ability to follow instructions; student interview including a report of challenging situations.

**School media center (library):** Can be brief requests/answers to much more complex communication.

Data example: teacher/media center staff report of any issues; student interview including a report of challenging situations.

Refer to the White Paper on Estimating Communication Effectiveness/Access <https://teachertoolstakeout.com/1345-legal-issues>

## Accessibility Considerations for Students with Hearing Loss

### *What Auxiliary Aids and Services are Needed to Ensure Effective Communication?*

Communication access is a key component of 504, IDEA and Title II of the ADA. A November, 2014 policy guidance from the US Departments of Education and Justice clarified that, under Title II of the ADA, schools are required to ensure that communication access is as effective for children with hearing loss as it is for their typically hearing peers through the provision of appropriate auxiliary aids and services. Auxiliary aids and services make aurally or visually delivered information available so that students can receive information from, and convey information to, others as effectively as students without disabilities. This applies to all students with hearing loss, regardless of whether they have an IEP, 504 Plan or not. Each student with known hearing loss should be assessed and accommodations provided as soon as possible after a need is identified or after it is requested, regardless of the special education evaluation process.

Auxiliary Aids	Communication Type	Examples
Passing notes	Student asking a simple question	Student giving a note to the media specialist to request a book
Exchange of written materials	Simple 2-way exchange.	Student providing a note of absence to the office; staff member writes a note asking a simple yes/no question
Note takers	Standard class lecture.	Two class peers or a hired note taker take lecture notes on carbonized paper or via a computer and share the notes with the student at the end of class.
Assistive listening systems	Large group instruction and small group activities. Could be used during controlled class discussions.	Use of hearing assistance technology (i.e., FM) to overcome the negative effects of distance, noise, reverberation during all teacher instruction. Can also be used in small group learning as long as the microphone is effectively used by group members. If the teacher routinely does not allow classmates to contribute to class discussion until the FM microphone is passed to them then formal class discussions can be accessible.
Accessible electronic and information technology	Access to instruction or to all of media material.	Providing face-to-face instructions in a quiet area before computerized testing begins. Appropriate connective cabling to ensure high fidelity reception of speech generated by the media device through the student's hearing devices.
Open and closed captioning	Access to video presentations.	Ensuring that any video materials that are required or optional learning activities are captioned and that the captions are visible to the student.
Automated speech-to-text translation captioning	Access to large group instruction and 1:1 conversations. Access to class discussions is possible	Use of automated computer captioning (teacher uses microphone; computer/media tablet on student desk shows captions) during all teacher instruction. Microphone can be used for 1:1 conversations. With correct microphone and use, class discussions can be accessed.
Real-time computer-aided transcription services (CART)	Access to large group, small group instruction and discussions.	Verbatim transcription of all classroom communication provided via an onsite or remote CART provider. Quality of captioning depends on the CART provider's ability to hear the communication within the classroom (i.e., noisy, active discussions are difficult to transcribe).
Interpreters/Cued Speech Transliterators	Access to large group, small group instruction and discussions.	Translation of all verbal classroom communication into sign language or cued speech provided via an onsite interpreter or transliterator. Quality of access depends on expertise of person.
<b>Services</b>		
Training for staff, student and/or parents		Inservice at beginning of each year for teachers by an educator specializing in hearing loss.
Consultation/collaboration among staff, parents, and/or other professionals		Classroom observation, assessment and resulting consultation by an educator specializing in hearing loss with school staff and parents to monitor effective communication concerns.

For more information on the policy clarification go to <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/dcl-faqs-effective-communication-201411.pdf>  
 Karen L. Anderson, PhD (2014). Supporting Success for Children with Hearing Loss. <http://successforkidswithhearingloss.com>