

Communicating Clearly with Young Children with Hearing Loss: Tips for Home

Identifying ways to help children feel successful communicating is key to their becoming more confident and using more language. Whether children are talking, signing, cueing or using a combined approach there can be times when communication seems challenging. Consider using some of these tips to enhance family interactions.

Ideas for home

1. Stay within 3-5 feet to increase the auditory and visual cues for your child.
2. Talk, sing and read to your child for shared communication throughout each day.
3. Notice your child's interests so you can play together and talk about what you do.
4. If your child uses a hearing aid or cochlear implant, keep it on during waking hours.
5. Hold an awake baby in positions close to your face or looking outward to better hear and see.
6. Get down on your child's eye level for your voice and face to be clearer.
7. Use typical facial expressions to illustrate your meaning (e.g. surprised.)
8. Add natural gestures to illustrate your intent (e.g. come here.)
9. Obtain your child's attention before interacting so the entire message is communicated. (e.g. call his name, get into his view, wave your hand)
10. Talk away from dishwasher, coffee grinder, air conditioner etc. to reduce listening in noise.
11. Close windows to reduce outdoor sounds (especially in cars where wind noise generates.)
12. Avoid calls on speaker phones where weak audio reduces communication clarity.
13. Use circular furniture arrangements to improve interactions among a group.
14. Obtain fire/smoke/clock alarms with lights or vibration for the child's independence and safety.
15. Include captioning for TV, video and Internet viewing even before your child is reading.



Confer with other parents of children with hearing loss and meet individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing because they can share practical examples and positive experiences.

Communicating Clearly with Young Children with Hearing Loss: Tips for School

Helping staff identify how to best support the communication approach a child is using is key to his school success. There are also strategies and suggestions that may enhance communication for any child with hearing loss. Consider these ideas for creating a more accessible environment for the entire class.

Suggestions for School:

1. Stay within 3-5 feet of student to strengthen both auditory and visual cues.
2. Interact at a normal pace without exaggerating words or facial expressions.
3. If student seems uncertain repeat once before changing wording of the message.
4. Use sentences and open-ended questions (avoid yes/no) for full exchanges.
5. Pause to encourage student's responses and allow time for him to process.
6. Point to the person speaking so student can quickly find the source.
7. Repeat a speaker's question before answering so student has context.
8. Provide pictorial or written directions so student can check requirements.
9. Give student all information before he starts a task. (Do not add comments.)
10. Provide a written summary or captions for multi-media presentations.
11. Put chairs in semi circles and use low room dividers so student has full view.
12. Avoid standing in front of windows, lights or open doors to prevent backlit glare.
13. Reduce background noise by closing doors and turning off equipment not in use.
14. Realize sound levels in high ceilinged and large areas can interfere with listening.
15. Explore providing support via varied technology for classes and homework.



Confer with the student to identify useful strategies because individuals have their own preferences and then the student has the opportunity to act as a problem-solver and self-advocate.