

Hearing Loss

Spotlight on: School-Age Children



COMMUNICATION
ACROSS THE LIFESPAN

Better Hearing & Speech Month

Hearing loss in school-age children presents unique challenges. Overlooked, it can impact academics, social success, and behavior. It is important to address hearing loss in school-age children as soon as it is identified!

ABCs: How Hearing Loss Affects Students: Children with hearing loss that is left unaddressed may have trouble with:

- **Academics.** This may include problems with language arts and vocabulary; delays in reading, spelling, math, and problem solving; and lower scores on achievement and verbal IQ tests. Children may have greater need for special education or support services in the classroom.
- **Behavior & Social.** This may include significant trouble following directions and working in groups. Children may also act withdrawn, exhibit lower performance on measures of social maturity, and have self-described feelings of isolation, exclusion, embarrassment, annoyance, confusion, and helplessness.
- **Communication.** Children may experience delays and/or difficulty with tasks involving language concepts, memory and comprehension, and receptive (understanding) and expressive (using) language.

By the Numbers: Almost 15% of children 6–19 years of age have low- or high-frequency hearing loss in one or both ears, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Help in Schools: The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) states that all children are entitled to free appropriate public education. Under IDEA, local school districts provide education services designed to meet the individual needs of students with hearing loss who qualify. If a child with hearing loss is found eligible for services, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) may specify intervention from audiologists, speech-language pathologists, and teachers of the deaf or hard of hearing to facilitate school success.

Maximizing Success: In addition to school services, parents can help their child succeed in school by doing the following:

- **Championing Classroom Technology**—A classroom can be fitted with certain technologies, such as an FM system, to further assist a child using a hearing aid or cochlear implant. This makes it easier for the child to hear the teacher in a group setting. Other technologies—such as sound-field systems, where a teacher speaks into a microphone transmitter—can benefit all kids in the classroom. These can be included in a child's IEP.
- **Encouraging Specific Teaching Strategies**—Talk to teachers about basic strategies that help a child hear better in class—such as seating the child in a preferred location, facing forward while teaching, giving both verbal and written instructions on assignments, and using visual aids.
- **Educating About Noisy Classrooms**—Noise makes it more difficult for children with hearing loss to hear classroom instruction, and it is actually a distraction for many children. Inform the school about ways to make classrooms quieter, such as placing rugs over bare floors, turning off noisy classroom equipment when not in use, and placing latex-free caps on chair legs.



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