



Indiana School for the Deaf

*Indiana's Statewide Program of
Hearing Recovery for Deaf Children*

Outreach Services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children

Audiology Services • Indiana School for the Deaf

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Information regarding the potential impact of hearing loss:

Hearing loss can cause difficulty in many situations in which hearing and listening are mandatory. If a child cannot clearly hear and understand a person speaking, a significant amount of information is missed. Some of the difficulties with hearing loss include the ability to hear and understand faint or distant speech, hearing subtle conversational cues, following fast-paced conversations, and discriminating word-sound distinctions. Speech may be audible (heard) but not intelligible (understood) for a child with this type of hearing loss. The ability to receive intelligible (clear) speech can become more difficult when the person talking is moving around or away from the listener and when there are other auditory distractions. As a result, children with hearing loss often become more easily fatigued than their normal-hearing peers.

Many children with hearing loss may benefit from the use of visual cues (watching the speaker for facial cues and body language/gestures). The variables associated with these cues include: speaker factors (i.e., facial expressions, presence of mustache/beard, rate of speech, body language, etc.), environmental factors (i.e., distance from speaker, lighting, viewing angles, visual distractions, etc.) and the message itself. The visibility of the message is also crucial to perceive speech using visual skills. However, it is also important to note that many of the approximately 40 phonemes, or basic units of speech, used in English demonstrate ambiguous (e.g., “ba”, “pa”, and “ma”) or very limited visible features (e.g., “-ing”, “ha”, and “-er”). In conversational speech, nearly 50% of the words are visually indistinguishable and can result in confusion and misperception on the part of the listener. Variables associated with the individual with hearing loss are also critical and include, but are not limited to, attitude, attention, alertness, and mental control. Fatigue, an inherent factor in processing speech visually, can also play an important part in the ability to benefit from visual cues.

It has been documented that any degree of hearing loss can interfere with the development of a child's spoken language, reading and writing skills and academic performance. Emotionally, there can be feelings of inadequacy, insecurity, and ineffectiveness. These feelings should be monitored by parents, teachers and others who are close to the child to avoid potential behavior/emotional difficulties and to address them immediately.

Tips for classroom teachers/educators for effective communication strategies:

- minimizing background noise (i.e., side conversations, noisy fans/equipment); waiting until the class is quiet before giving instructions
- having students sit where the teacher, chalk/dry erase board and other students can be seen
- having those writing on a chalkboard avoid talking with their backs to the class
- having one person in a group talk at a time and raise his/her hand before speaking
- having students that are talking avoid moving around in class excessively
- having students that are talking avoid standing in front of bright lights or windows in order to minimize glare
- encouraging others to talk at a natural rate without exaggerating mouth movements or covering their mouths/faces while speaking
- directing the attention of the class to the person talking
- providing a preview of new information/vocabulary before lessons
- cueing page numbers in books, key points, and work assignments by writing them on the board or overhead
- working one-on-one or in small groups, whenever possible
- incorporating hands-on activities into the lesson, whenever possible
- using closed-captioning for television/video

Outreach Mission:

To identify and find resources to meet the needs of deaf and hard of hearing children and their families throughout the state of Indiana.