

Speech and Language Therapy

Top Tips for Supporting a Child with Hearing Loss

Hearing losses are common in children and although the cause and severity can vary, and may be temporary or permanent, all children with a hearing loss will have to work harder to listen and learn.

Some general strategies you can use to support your child include:

- **Reduce background noise where possible** – background noise such as the radio, TV, rustling paper, scraping chairs and other people talking can make it difficult for a child to focus on, and understand what you are saying.
- **Gain your child's attention before you start to speak** – by calling your child's name or tapping them gently on the arm.
- **Face your child when talking** and try to get down to their level, so your child can lip-read and see your facial expression. Whilst talking avoid moving around, turning away, having light behind you (as this casts a shadow on your face,) and putting your hand in front of your mouth as these make it difficult to lip-read.
- **Use visual support where possible** - for example pictures, gestures, signs, demonstrations and writing (if your child can read).
- **Specifically teach your child new vocabulary** – a child with a hearing loss will need you to draw their attention to new words and explain their meaning. It is also important to check that your child has accurately heard and remembered new vocabulary.
- **Allow extra thinking time if needed** – it may take your child more time and effort to filter out additional noise and process the language in order to think of an answer.

In addition, if your child has a hearing aid or a cochlear implant:

- Remember that a hearing aid or cochlear implant will not 'cure' a hearing loss – whilst this equipment can significantly improve your child's hearing, it cannot completely replicate the complex process of hearing sounds, so extra consideration will still be needed to support them at home and school.
- Check hearing equipment is working every day – like your mobile phone, your child's equipment needs to be charged daily.
- Use the equipment as advised by your child's Teacher of the Deaf – this includes the radio aid which may be used to help in noisier situations. It can make a real difference to children.
- **Speak naturally and clearly** - Speaking slowly or too loudly makes lip-reading much more difficult so they need you to say words as you normally would.

For more information please see the National Deaf Children Society (NDCS) website: www.ndcs.org.uk/