



**Wrightington, Wigan and
Leigh Teaching Hospitals**
NHS Foundation Trust

Mild Hearing Loss (in children) - NDCS

Mild Hearing Loss Information for Professionals

Mild hearing loss can have a major impact on all aspects of a child's development, including language and literacy skills, working memory, attention and concentration, and social skills. A child with a mild hearing loss can miss up to 50% of what's being said in the classroom. 47% of parents of a child with a mild hearing loss feel that their child is behind for their age. In England, children with a mild hearing loss underachieve by a whole grade per GCSE. 8/10 children experience hearing loss due to glue ear before the age of 10. With your support, children with a mild hearing loss can achieve as much as other children.

Mild hearing loss has a particularly big impact on language and learning in the early years. Adults with a hearing loss can sometimes 'fill in the gaps' of what they've not heard by thinking about the situation, drawing on past experiences and making an educated guess at what someone has said. Younger deaf children can't do this because they haven't had the chance to build up a vocabulary or memory of what someone might say in a particular situation.

Signs of Mild Hearing Loss

- Doesn't respond when called
- Constantly asks for speech to be repeated
- Watches faces/lips intently
- Doesn't always follow instructions straightaway
- Often misunderstands or ignores instructions
- Makes little or no contribution to group discussions
- Watches what others are doing before doing it themselves
- Complains about not being able to hear
- Often needs help from their friends
- Tires easily
- Talks too loudly or too softly
- Becomes easily frustrated
- Appears inattentive or as though daydreaming
- Plays alone and doesn't engage with group social activities

Remember: mild hearing loss can fluctuate, especially if the child has glue ear. Children may display some of the above signs on some days but not others.

What Can You Do to Help?

1. **Make sure communication is clear and effective.**

- Check that you have the child's attention before you start talking, e.g., by saying the child's name.
- Speak clearly and at your normal level and pace – speaking too slowly or exaggerating mouth patterns will make you harder to understand as it distorts speech.
- Make sure the child can see your face clearly to help them to hear you and follow your lip patterns. Avoid standing in front of a window or bright light, or turning to face the board while speaking.
- Make your teaching as visual as possible by using photos, graphics, and other visual aids.
- Encourage turn-taking and speaking one at a time during group work.

2. **Reduce background noise as much as possible.**

- Turn off any equipment, like overhead projectors and computers, when not in use.
- Shut the door if there's outside background noise.
- Use soft furnishings and fabrics to help improve acoustics.

3. **Make the most of hearing technology** such as soundfield systems (which allow your voice to be heard clearly and equally across the classroom). Be aware that some children may be reluctant to use hearing technology – gently encourage and support them.

4. **Factor in plenty of breaks** as children with mild hearing loss have to concentrate harder than their peers, which can lead to tiredness (more information at ndcs.org.uk/tired).

5. **Check there's been a full assessment** of the child's needs relating to their hearing loss. Get advice from a specialist Teacher of the Deaf on this.

Next Steps

- Always talk to the child's parents – they will have lots of ideas and suggestions.
- If the child is old enough, ask them how you can best support them.
- Speak to the person responsible for special or additional needs in your school.

- Contact the local specialist education support service for further advice and support from a Teacher of the Deaf.
- If you think a child might have an undiagnosed hearing loss, discuss this with their parents and suggest they ask their GP for a referral to an audiologist.

More Information

- ndcs.org.uk/primary-education
- ndcs.org.uk/secondary-education
- Watch our video with tips on supporting children with a mild hearing loss (go to youtube.com/user/ndcswebteam and search for 'mild').

Any questions? We're here to help. Freephone Helpline: 0808 800 8880

helpline@ndcs.org.uk ndcs.org.uk/livechat ndcs.org.uk

About Us

We're here for every deaf child who needs us – no matter what their level or type of deafness or how they communicate. We want to work with professionals like you to overcome the barriers that hold deaf children back. Visit our website ndcs.org.uk to join us for free. You'll have access to:

- our expert information resources for professionals
- our quarterly digital magazine and email updates
- our workshops and events
- our Freephone Helpline

We are the National Deaf Children's Society, the leading charity for deaf children.

Freephone Helpline: 0808 800 8880 (voice and text) helpline@ndcs.org.uk ndcs.org.uk

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