

Advice for Children with Hearing Loss in Schools Community Paediatric Audiology Service



Introduction

Glue ear is one of the most common childhood illnesses. It can result in temporary hearing problems that are prone to fluctuate and can affect one or both ears.

Children with hearing problems, regardless of the degree or type, can experience considerable difficulty discriminating speech accurately in the acoustic conditions of a normal classroom. Hearing problems can also compound any other learning difficulties that are present.

Schools and teachers of young children are often in contact with children with this type of temporary hearing difficulty. They are likely to have techniques for making certain that these children are supported as much as possible in the classroom.

Some of the things the school or teachers are likely to do follow below:

Reduce background noise

Quiet listening conditions will help a child discriminate speech. Noise in a classroom of children is normal. However, reducing the noise level should be attempted whenever possible.

Preferential classroom seating

- Seat the child away from distracting background noise.
- Seat the child near the teacher's area of instruction – not more than 10 feet from the typical position of the teacher.
- Preferential seating should consider the child's view of the teacher to maximise visual cues.
- Seat the child so that their better ear is favoured, if there is one. This means having the better ear nearer the source of sound and not next to a wall.
- Allow flexibility of seating if the area of instruction changes.

Alerting

- Touch the child gently to gain their attention.
- Gain eye contact with the child before giving class instructions. They will benefit from the visual cues.

Teaching techniques

- Give short and clear instructions.
- Speak distinctly and at a moderate rate. Avoid shouting. If they've not heard, being closer is better
- Gain the child's attention before beginning on new concepts/ vocabulary or when new instructions are being given.
- Use written key words or visual information that will help clarify oral information.
- Discreet checking that the child has heard and understood
- Encourage the child to ask when they did not hear or understand what has been said.

Awareness of behaviour changes

Children with temporary or fluctuating hearing problems can find the change in their hearing confusing. They may become frustrated, aggressive, clingy, shy or tired from struggling to listen. It is possible that they have not heard instead of being disobedient or naughty. They may hear some sounds better than others. Some days may seem better than others. This is normal with temporary hearing problems.

For further information about this service contact:

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If you require this information in a different format such as in large print or on audio tape, or in a different language please contact the service on the details above.

If you have any compliments about this service or suggestions for improvements, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 0300 131 1000 (charges may apply depending on your network) or email: ccs-tr.pals@nhs.net.

For free, confidential health advice and information 24 hours a day, 365 days a year please contact NHS 111.