

Suggestions for Classroom Teachers with Hard of Hearing Students

If a student in your classroom has a hearing loss, you can help your student by:

1. Promoting acceptance of your student

Your student will benefit from a classroom where he/she feels accepted and where adaptations are made without drawing attention.

- Welcome the student to your class. Your positive attitude will help other students accept him/her.
- Discuss your student's hearing loss with him/her; let him/her know you are willing to help.
- As appropriate, have your student, the audiologist, or another person explain the student's hearing loss to your entire class.
- Make modifications seem as natural as possible so the student is not singled out.
- Accept your student as an individual; be aware of his/her assets as well as his/her limitations.
- Encourage your student's special abilities or interests.

2. Be sure hearing aids and other amplification devices are used when recommended

This will enable your student to use his/her hearing maximally.

- Realize that hearing aids make sounds louder, but not necessarily clearer. Hearing aids do not make hearing normal.
- Be sure your student's hearing aids or other devices are checked daily to see that they are working properly.
- Encourage the student to care for his/her hearing aid(s) by putting it on, telling you when it is not functioning properly, etc.
- Be sure your student always has a spare battery at school.
- Know who to contact if your student's hearing aid or FM system is not working properly.
- Ensure that you understand how and when to use your student's FM system. Consult the Hearing Resource Teacher or local audiology clinic if you have questions.

3. Provide preferential seating

Appropriate seating will enhance your student's ability to hear and understand what is said in the classroom.

- Seat near where you typically teach. It will be helpful if your student is at one side of the classroom so that he/she can easily turn and follow classroom dialogue.
- Seat where your student can easily watch your face without straining to look straight up. The second or third row is best.
- Seat away from noise sources, including hallways, radiators, pencil sharpeners, etc.
- Seat where light is on your face and not in your student's eyes.
- If the student has a better ear, place it toward the classroom.
- Allow your student to move to other seats when necessary for demonstrations, classroom discussions, or other activities.

4. Increase visual information. Your student will use lip-reading and other visual information to supplement what he/she hears

- Remember your student needs to see your face in order to lip-read!
 - Try to stay in one place while talking to the class so your student does not have to lip-read a "moving target"
 - Avoid talking to the classroom while writing on or facing the chalkboard.
 - Avoid putting your hands, papers, or books in front of your face when talking.
 - Avoid talking with your face turned downward while reading.
 - Keep the light on your face, not at your back. Avoid standing in front of windows where the glare will make it difficult for your student to see your face.
- Use visual aids, such as pictures and diagrams, when possible.
- Demonstrate what you want the student to understand when possible. Use natural gestures, such as pointing to objects being discussed, to help clarify what you say.
- Use the chalkboard – write assignments, new vocabulary words, key words, etc. on it.

5. Minimize classroom noise

Even a small amount of noise will make it very difficult for your student to hear and understand what is said.

- Seat your student away from noisy parts of your classroom.
- Wait until your class is quiet before talking to them.

6. Use clear speech and encourage others to do so also

Clear speech will help your student understand you and others better.

- Speak naturally in a good, clear voice. It is not necessary to shout or exaggerate lip movement.
- Use a moderate rate of speech.
- Pause briefly between phrases to allow time for auditory processing.

7. Modify teaching procedures

Modifications will allow your student to benefit from your instruction and will decrease the need for repetition.

- Be sure your student is watching and listening when you are talking to him/her.
- Be sure your student understands what is said by having him/her repeat information or answer questions.
- Rephrase, rather than repeat, questions and instructions if your student has not understood.
- Write key words, new words, new topics, etc. on the chalkboard.
- Repeat or rephrase things said by other students during classroom discussions.
- Introduce new vocabulary to the student in advance. The Hearing Resource Teacher or parents may be able to help with this.
- Use a “buddy” to alert your student to listen and to be sure your student has understood all information correctly.

8. Have realistic expectations

This will help your student succeed in your classroom.

- Remember that your student cannot understand everything all of the time, no matter how hard he/she tries. Encourage him/her to ask for repetition.
- Be patient when your student asks for repetition.
- Give breaks from listening when necessary. Your student may fatigue easily because he/she is straining to listen and understand.
- Expect student to follow classroom routine. Do not spoil or pamper your student.
- Expect your student to accept the same responsibilities for considerate behaviour, homework, and dependability as you require of other students in your classroom.
- As the student to repeat if you cannot understand him/her. Your student’s speech may be distorted because he/she does not hear sounds clearly. Work with the Hearing Resource Teacher to help your student improve his/her speech as much as possible.
- Be alert for fluctuations of hearing due to middle ear problems.
- Request support from the Hearing Resource Teacher, audiologist, parents, or others when you feel uncertain about your student and what is best for him/her.

If you have questions, please contact an audiologist in your community.

To locate the nearest Fraser Health Hearing Clinic, please go to www.fraserhealth.ca