

Early Years Advice and Guidance Deaf Friendly Settings: Adaptations and Strategies

Hearing Friendly Settings: Adaptations and Strategies

Identification

Deafness/hearing impairment (HI) affects a child's ability to access auditory information. It can be uni or bi-lateral and mild, moderate, severe or profound. A child may be given audiological equipment such as hearing aids, a BAHA (Bone Anchored Hearing Aid) or a Cochlea Implant depending upon the level and type of hearing loss. Hearing aids, BAHAs and Cochlear Implants do not restore normal hearing levels. A hearing loss can be temporary or permanent, occurring from birth or at any time. Glue ear (unaided) and the insertion of grommets are not deemed as a hearing impairment.

Hearing impairment is a low incidence disability and most children with HI meet the criteria for SEND.

Degrees of deafness:

The British Society of Audiological descriptors are used to define degrees of hearing loss.

Mild hearing loss	Unaided threshold 21-40dBHL
Moderate hearing loss	Unaided threshold 41-70dBHL
Severe hearing loss	Unaided threshold 71-95dBHL
Profound hearing loss	Unaided threshold in excess of 95dBHL

There are different types of deafness:

- **Conductive hearing loss** (can be temporary or permanent) – when sound can't pass efficiently through the outer and middle ear to the cochlear and auditory nerve, e.g. glue ear (unaided)
- **Sensorineural deafness** – when there is a fault in the inner ear or auditory nerve (permanent loss)
- **Mixed hearing loss** – a combination of conductive and sensorineural loss
- **Auditory Neuropathy Spectrum Disorder (ANSD)** – when sounds are received normally by the cochlea but become disrupted as they travel to the brain.

Hearing impairment can have an impact on a child's attention & listening, language and communication and access to learning and can affect their social and emotional development.

Children with permanent sensorineural and aided conductive hearing loss are identified by local audiology departments and referred directly to the Low Incidence Needs Team. The specialist support and intervention offered is based on the Eligibility Framework.

Key things to remember

- Support and advice should be obtained from the local authority Low Incidence Needs Team (LINT) - Hearing Impairment.
- The child is first and foremost a child whose development will be individual no matter what level of hearing impairment.
- Hearing is the major source of information. It stimulates curiosity, integrates information and invites exploration.
- Higher skills in the use of the other senses do not automatically develop to compensate for the lack of hearing. They develop through experience, practice and supported learning.
- Learning through senses other than hearing can be slower and may be incomplete; it cannot always provide all the necessary information in order to ensure an accurate understanding of people, places and objects in the child's environment.
- Lack of hearing can have a profound effect on the child's ability to interact socially. Social cues of intonation, tone, pitch and volume of voice can be missed or misunderstood, and alternative ways of reading other people's feelings and non-verbal communication needs to be actively taught.
- A child's confidence is influenced by their ability to be independent in both their learning and in everyday routines and they need to have access to sounds or acknowledgement of sounds in order to do this.
- The impact of deafness/hearing impairment on a child can be influenced by a range of factors; age at which they became deaf – if it was identified at birth or later on, support from parents, input from professionals, cognitive ability, the function of hearing technology and how often it is worn.
- The impact of deafness/hearing impairment on language development means a young child has many difficulties to overcome.

The Transition Process

It is important that the Deaf/hearing impaired child becomes confident within the new environment as soon as possible (either arriving into nursery or moving on). The LINT Qualified Teacher of the Deaf (QToD) will support you and the child with this. There should be opportunities and time to:

- Visit as soon as a new environment is identified.
- Meet key staff to become familiar with their lip pattern, facial expressions, body language and voice.
- Become familiar with the physical layout of the building/classroom and the routines and procedures of the day including lunch arrangements and which noises to expect.
- Locate any radio aid equipment appropriately and make the child aware of the storage arrangements.
- Make necessary adaptations in terms of noise and reverberation e.g. by using soft furnishings.
- Complete risk assessments and establish procedures in relation to particular events such as fires and safety of the child (PEEP - Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan).
- Attend training for maintenance of hearing equipment, BSL or Makaton if required.

The Physical Environment

How can you make the physical environment more accessible for a Deaf/hearing impaired child?

Lighting

Lighting should be:

- as consistent as possible throughout the building to allow access to lip patterns, facial expressions.
- good quality, even and without glare
- controllable, with blinds for natural light and dimmer switches for artificial light

Noise

- Use of other rooms or quieter spaces for 1:1 or small group work.
- Reduce background noise as much as possible.

- Keep doors closed to ensure hallways and external noises are minimised.
- Keep windows closed when external noise is nearby.
- Be aware of reverberation of sound and try to use soft furnishing and hessian on wall displays to absorb background noise.
- Use of carpets on floors.
- Use of felt on chair and table legs.

Hearing assistance technology

- If child is suitable for a radio aid or soundfield system this should be accommodated within the setting.

The Inclusive Curriculum

Every Deaf/hearing impaired child will have different needs, but they should have access to the same broad and balanced curriculum.

Appropriate seating position

- Most (but not all) Deaf/hearing impaired children benefit from sitting close to the speaker. Consider which side it is best for the child to sit on with their better listening ear, if they have one.
- No distracting or background noise.
- Be able to have access to speakers lip pattern.

Managing the room

- Closing doors to noisy areas or corridors.
- Closing windows to outside noise and closing curtains or blinds if necessary.
- Positioning full bookshelves and cupboards against partition walls to minimise noise from other rooms.

- Ensure heating and air conditioning systems operate within acceptable noise levels through regular maintenance.

Manage the group

- Consider strategies to establish and maintain a quiet working atmosphere through good behaviour management.
- Encourage children to develop an understand of how noises and such as chairs scraping, doors banging, shouting, etc. can interfere with what their Deaf peers can hear.
- Encourage turn taking and hand up policy so that the Deaf/hearing impaired child is able to hear and learn to understand their peers.

Teaching Strategies:

A Deaf/hearing impaired child may miss incidental learning opportunities.

They may require a multi-sensory approach, more frequent adult intervention, differentiated activities specific to their hearing needs, extra time to understand and complete tasks.

Use of visual aids

- Use pictures, illustrations and objects to support what is being said.
- Give a picture of the room and label areas, boxes and cupboards.
- Use visual timetables to describe what is happening in the day.
- Make routine activities as visual as possible.

Use of photo diaries

- Helps the child recall concepts and vocabulary.
- Provides a prompt for practising language and extending language.
- Provides a means of informing parents and allowing them to practise at home.

Using routine and repetition

- Helps the child to predict what is coming next and be ready to pick up on incidental cues.
- Practise some words or phrases in the same context over and over.
- Helps the child begin to learn the context of what is said so they can start to link new words and ideas to what they already know.
- Use of books, learning action rhymes and repetitive games all support opportunities to repeat language pattern.

Additional adult support

- Should support child and provide a narrative to daily activities to allow them to learn language in play.

- Prepares the child for a new activity and can offer some pre teaching of language or new vocabulary.
- Should check the child has understood and can repeat information or instructions.
- More specialist support can be provided by LINT if eligible.

Avoiding fatigue

- Listening and concentration for lip reading requires extra energy and cognitive resource for a child with hearing impairment.
- Ensure structured activities and learning are planned for earlier in the day.
- Plan sessions which do not rely upon lip reading.
- Consider the pace of the activity and build in breaks-
- Avoid overload of verbal instructions and adapt materials for visual learning.

Using learning technology

- If using an ipad with specific apps make sure Deaf/hearing impaired child can access them. An audio input lead can be supplied to connect ipad to hearing technology.
- If using an interactive white board ensure the child is able to see and hear the sound source.
- Some DVD/Online clips have subtitles or signed BSL interpretation.
- Use pause to check and clarify understanding.

Outdoor play and physical activity

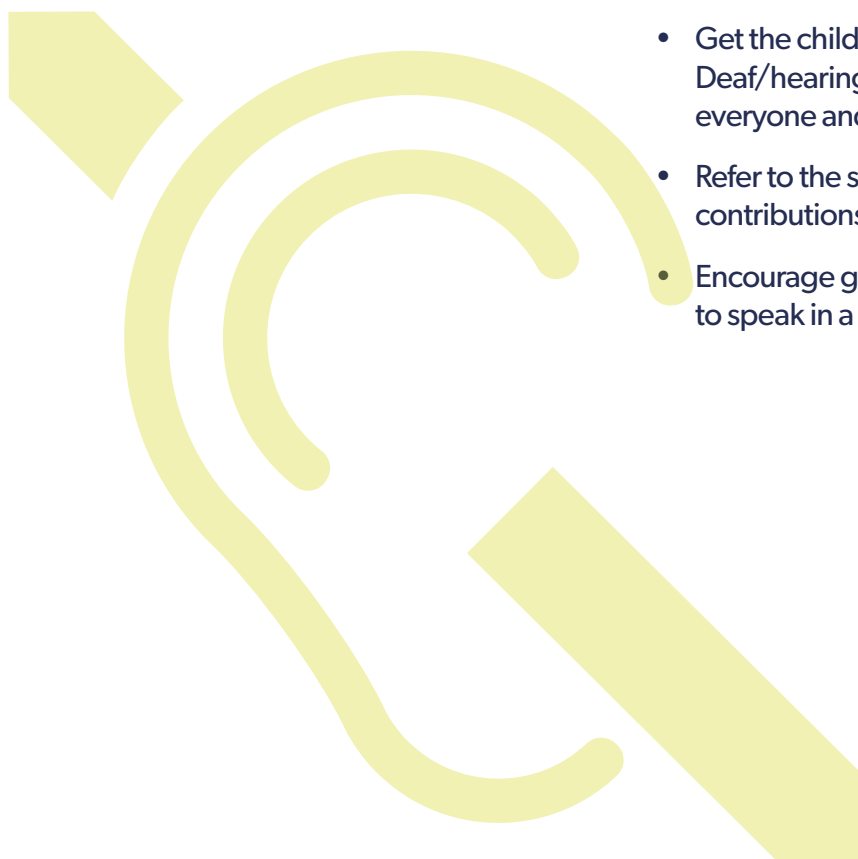
- Support the Deaf/hearing impaired child and prepare them for what will be expected of them.
- Hold up visual signs when giving instructions.
- Engage a hearing buddy who the Deaf/hearing impaired child can observe and follow when the instruction has changed.

Educational visits or outings

- Prepare a Deaf/hearing impaired child using pictures and photos.
- Look at objects of interest ahead of the visit.
- Have time to go over any new vocabulary ahead of the visit.
- Use an adult to support the Deaf/hearing impaired child in a new environment e.g. to hear sounds.

Story, music and group time

- Choose appropriate books that the Deaf/hearing impaired child will understand and be able to sequence.
- Use different props and visual cues to explain the storyline.
- Use facial expressions to match the emotions and feelings of the characters in the story.
- If the child uses BSL/SSE or Makaton then use the appropriate signs alongside the story.
- Act out the story.
- Choose appropriate instruments so that you don't overload the senses.
- Choose instruments where you can still hear instructions at the same time.
- Give visual cues on when to join in and when to stop playing musical instruments.
- Choose repetitive rhymes and singing to encourage language.
- Get the children to sit in a circle so the Deaf/hearing impaired child can see everyone and have access to lip patterns.
- Refer to the speaker and repeat any contributions if missed.
- Encourage good turn taking and waiting to speak in a group.



The Social Curriculum:

It is an expectation that all Deaf/hearing impaired children are included in the whole life of the nursery/EY setting.

Enhancing self-esteem

- Encourage independence around their own hearing aid technology and deaf advocacy.
- Discover, recognise and reward the child's strengths.
- Provide opportunities for choices and decision making.
- Review and monitor appropriateness of adult intervention and carefully extend expectations depending upon the task.
- Encourage peers to show interest in and experience any specialist equipment to help make it the 'norm'

Communicating Meaning

- Say the child's name first to gain their attention.
- Facilitate effective communication between the Deaf/hearing impaired child and their peers.
- Help other children understand the difficulties the Deaf/hearing impaired child faces.
- Teach about aspects of social interaction such as turn taking and co-operation.
- Give meaning and context to words through visuals and sign where needed.

Facilitating friendships –

- Provide access to all shared activities (with support if required).
- Peer awareness sessions can be delivered by the child's QToD.
- Ensure children with hearing impairment are made aware of what is acceptable/ appropriate behaviour and body language and how to interact and communicate with their peers.



**If you need further advice, please contact the
Low Incidence Needs Team (LINT) - (Hearing Impairment)**

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