

Fact sheet

For teachers:

Adjustments for students with a hearing impairment

A hearing loss may impact on students' ability to:

- produce speech sounds;
- hear and understand language;
- produce oral language;
- acquire and use background knowledge across a range of topics;
- access information presented in the classroom;
- understand new concepts - particularly language-based concepts;
- interact with other students.

The student may often be more comfortable in a small group or one-to-one situation. This diagnosis will impact on each student differently at different stages. The student may have additional difficulties in intellect or mobility, or may have a diagnosis in another impairment area.

A student with a hearing impairment will learn key concepts from the curriculum, and develop the skills to apply these. Some students with a hearing impairment may exceed year level expectations in subject areas of interest, but then have fewer skills in other areas.

Adjustments in planning

- Plan with other team members (speech language pathologist, advisory visiting teachers, special education staff, year level teams, subject area teams) to incorporate priorities for the deaf/hearing impaired student.
- Consider interactions between students and other members of the school community.
- Consider the structure and organisation of the school (e.g. timetable, behaviour management policy).
- Consider the selection and use of curriculum materials (e.g. worksheets, videotapes, sport equipment).
- Consider the classroom setting (e.g. open-area, single classroom).
- Consider settings inside and outside the classroom (e.g. lunch, physical education activities, work experience).
- Consider extra-curricula activities (e.g. religious education, sports days, school band).
- Consider specific needs in KLAs/subjects.
- Use the IEP (Individual Education Plan) to prioritise the adjustments needed for the student to access the curriculum.
- Allow time for the development of language and listening skills in the classroom context.
- Use routines and structures to support students to predict what will come next in the program.

Adjustments in teaching

- Pre-teach specific language and concepts required to ensure the student has the required prior knowledge for the activity.
- Gain the student's attention before you give instructions.
- Ensure that you are clearly visible to the student at all times.
- Keep your hands and other objects away from your face while speaking.
- Use normal clear speech. Do not exaggerate your speech.
- Avoid speaking while facing the blackboard.
- Avoid moving around the classroom while speaking.
- Communicate clearly. Repeat and rephrase when necessary. Emphasise key words.
- Use a focusing phrase e.g. "listen to this question".
- Check for understanding by asking the student to tell you what they need to do or repeat what they heard.
- Use buddies to help relay and rephrase information.
- Give students time to look at visual aids before talking to the aid so that the student with a hearing impairment has time to shift their attention from the visual to the auditory.
- Use visual aids such as word webs and semantic maps and concrete examples to illustrate the links between information.
- Provide an outline of what is to be learnt, focus on key concepts and opportunities to practise and demonstrate competence in a number of ways.
- Increase opportunities to practise new skills and concepts - teaching a younger child; demonstrating to other adults in the school; practising on the computer with a peer.
- Utilise available human resources - peer tutoring, teacher aides, special educators, therapy services, interpreters, notetakers.
- Encourage class members to use sign language with the student if needed.
- Teach routines, expectations of behaviour and consequences explicitly.
- Display routines visually using timetables or calendars of upcoming events.
- Explain sudden changes of routine so students know what is going on around them.

Adjustments in assessment

- Identify barriers in assessment that may prevent the deaf/hearing impaired student from demonstrating their knowledge and skills or competence.
- Consider the provision of special arrangements and/or exemptions.
- Change the nature of the task (e.g. requiring the student to demonstrate skills rather than write an explanation of them).
- Alter the procedures of a task (e.g. allowing the student to listen to a live presenter instead of listening to an audiotape, allowing the student to sign an oral presentation).
- Provide specialised equipment (e.g. allowing the student to use a TTY, captioned videotape, FM system).
- Vary the conditions for a task (e.g. providing the student with extra time or alternative seating arrangements).
- Revise the language used within a task, if appropriate (e.g. rewording a worksheet or assessment task so a student can understand it clearly).
- Revise the language expected in student responses (e.g. focusing on the content students give in response rather than vocabulary and grammatical structures used).
- Consider the practical arrangements relating to the assessment.

- Consider the venue (e.g. Do the acoustics and visual conditions provide optimal opportunities for the student? Does the student need a separate venue?).
- Plan seating arrangements (e.g. does the student need to sit close to the front to see and hear the presenter clearly?).
- Consider the delivery of instructions or task (e.g. Does the student require spoken directions to be signed? Does the student need a live presenter or written script to access an audiotape).
- Provide extra time (e.g. how much extra time does the student require to overcome language barriers?).

Adjustments in environment

- Be aware of the effect of environmental noise on a deaf/hearing impaired student.
- Minimise environmental noise by using curtains or pictures on windows, book bags on chairs, carpets, felt or rubber tips on the legs of chairs, hanging mobiles of students work.
- Install a Soundfield Amplification System (SAS) to cut down background noise in the classroom.
- Avoid glare or light behind you - don't stand in front of windows to speak to the student.

Adjustments in resources

- Use captioned videos/DVDs.
- Use assistive technology such as an FM system, Soundfield Amplification Systems as required.
- Use pictorial programs or sign-based web-sites to create a range of resources from instructions to readers.
- Utilise peers, volunteers, teaching teams and specialists.
- Borrow resources, materials from the Advisory Visiting Teacher or a nearby Special Education facility.

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