



Canadian  
**Hard of Hearing**  
Association  
NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR



# **MY CHILD HAS HEARING LOSS**

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**GUIDEBOOK FOR PARENTS**

# Acknowledgements

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**The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association - Newfoundland and Labrador (CHHA-NL) would like to acknowledge the contribution of the following advisors toward the development of this guidebook and thank them for their time, expertise, and support:**

- Eastern Health Audiology department
  - Stacey Welsh, an itinerant teacher and early interventionist for children who are d/Deaf or hard of hearing
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## **My Child Has Hearing Loss: Guidebook for Parents Canadian Hard of Hearing Association - Newfoundland and Labrador 2023 Edition**

The material contained within this guidebook is intended for informational purposes only. Information provided by CHHA-NL can in no way replace professional medical advice from a physician or a trained hearing care professional. If you have other questions about your child's hearing or what supports are available to you, please contact us.

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# Introduction

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We at the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association – Newfoundland and Labrador (CHHA-NL) are thrilled to offer this resource to families of children newly diagnosed with hearing loss. This guide is designed to be useful regardless of your child's age at the time of diagnosis. Some of the information will be helpful to you right away, while other parts you may not need until your child is a bit older. Keep this guidebook and refer to it as your child reaches new milestones.



Canadian  
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# SECTION ONE

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# ABOUT THE EAR AND HOW WE HEAR

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# How Hearing Works

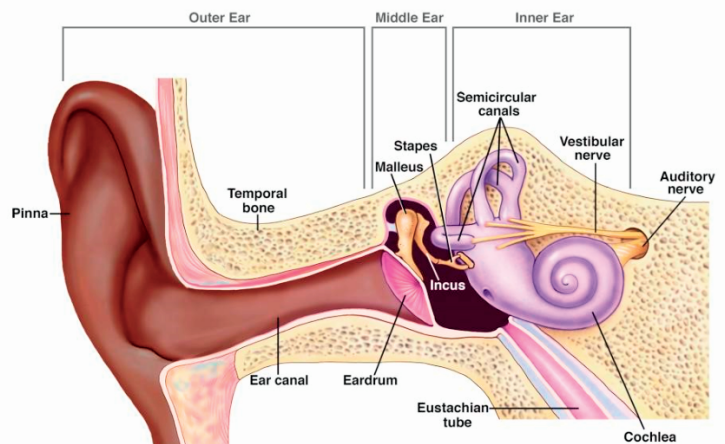
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Our body's ability to hear and identify sound is incredible! Sound travels through the air as vibrations, which are converted into electrical signals that your brain interprets as specific sounds. This process allows us to recognize and understand any sound, whether it's your baby crying or a bird chirping. Let's look at how hearing works step by step:

1. A sound disturbs the air and creates sound waves – similar to a rock hitting the water, it produces ripples. Sound waves enter the outer ear (**pinna**), which is perfectly shaped to funnel them into the ear canal.
2. The ear canal is a tunnel filled with air. At the end of it, there is a thin, tightly stretched membrane called the **eardrum**. The soundwaves travel down the ear canal and bounce off the eardrum.

3. Attached to the other side of the eardrum are three tiny bones (**ossicles: Stapes, Malleus, and Incus**) in the middle ear that vibrate as the eardrum moves.

4. In the middle ear the sound is amplified before it enters the **cochlea** in the inner ear. The cochlea is filled with fluid and is shaped like a snail shell. Inside it are tens of thousands of tiny **hair cells**.



<https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/how-do-we-hear>

5. When the fluid inside the cochlea moves, it makes the hair cells move and vibrate – like seaweed in the ocean moving with the waves. The hair cells translate these vibrations into electrical signals that then travel along the **auditory nerve** to the brain where they are recognized as sound.
6. The brain translates and identifies specific sounds, like a song on the radio, a mother's voice, or a phone ring.

Even if the smallest part of a person's hearing system doesn't work perfectly, their hearing is affected.



# Types of Hearing Loss

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There are three main types of hearing loss:

## Conductive Hearing Loss

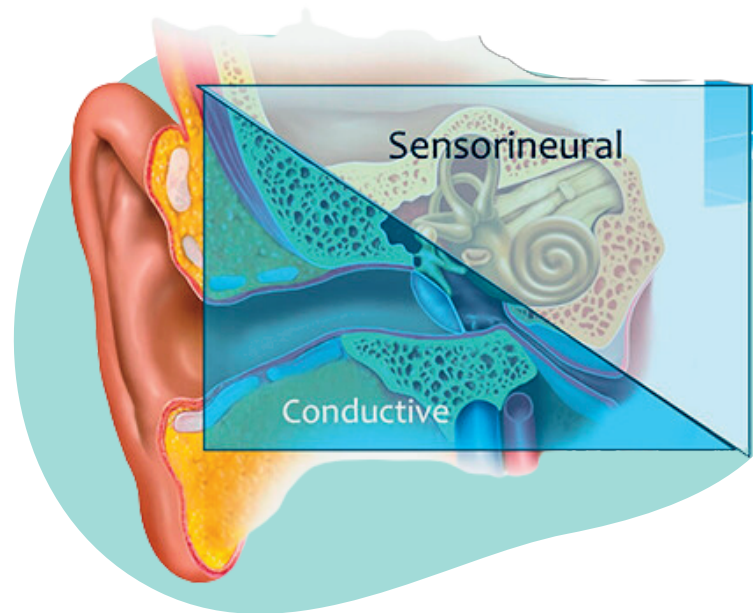
Hearing loss is called **conductive** when something is not working properly in the outer or middle ear. Common causes of this type of hearing loss are:

- wax or an object blocking the ear canal;
- malformation of the outer or the middle ear;
- fluid collection behind the eardrum (usually due to a middle ear infection).

This type of hearing loss **can sometimes be improved or corrected** through medication, ear wax removal, or surgical procedures.

## Sensorineural Hearing Loss

When the problem is in the inner ear or the auditory nerve, it is referred to as **sensorineural** hearing loss. This type of hearing loss is permanent and accounts for approximately 90% of all reported cases. Sensorineural hearing loss usually **cannot be fixed** by medication or surgery. The most common causes in children are infection, disease, premature birth, genetics, medications, or noise exposure.



## Mixed Hearing Loss

When both conductive and sensorineural issues are present, it is referred to as **mixed** hearing loss. This means there is damage to outer/middle ear **as well as** the inner ear. The outer and/or middle ear can't conduct sound properly to the inner ear, and the inner ear can't process the sound being sent to the brain.

# Other Ways to Describe Hearing Loss

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There are other ways to classify or describe hearing loss:

## Timing

When a baby is born with hearing loss, it is called **congenital** or **early onset**. **Acquired** or **later onset** hearing loss means it starts later in life.

## Cause

Hearing loss can be **genetic** or **environmental**. Genetic hearing loss runs in the family and is inherited from one or both parents. Environmental hearing loss is caused by external factors like lack of oxygen during birth, bacterial or viral infection, noise exposure, head injury, or medications that damage the inner ear. This type of hearing loss is not transferred from parents to their children in the genetic code. When both genetic and environmental causes are present, it is called **multifactorial hearing loss**.



## Hearing Level

Hearing loss can range from **mild** to **profound**.

## Affected Side(s)

Hearing loss can occur in one ear (**unilateral**) or both ears (**bilateral**).

## Stability

Hearing loss that gets worse over time is called **progressive**. To figure out if hearing loss is progressive or stable, all audiograms over a period of time must be compared.



# How to Read an Audiogram

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## The Audiogram

An audiogram is a graph that shows the softest sounds a person can hear at different pitches or frequencies. It always includes the following elements:

**Frequency (measured in Hz):** shows how high or low the pitch of the sound is and is located at the top of the audiogram. The lowest frequency is on the left, and the highest frequency is on the right.

**Sound volume (measured in dB):** measures how loud the sound is and is shown on the side of the audiogram. The softest sounds are on the top, and the loudest are on the bottom.

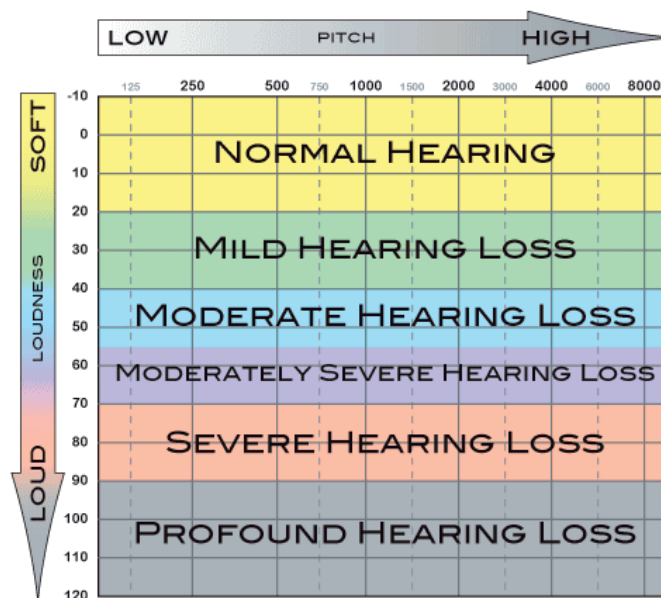
## Hearing Level

The softest sound a person can hear at each pitch is marked on the graph:

X – for the left ear (could be marked in blue)

O – for the right ear (could be marked in red)

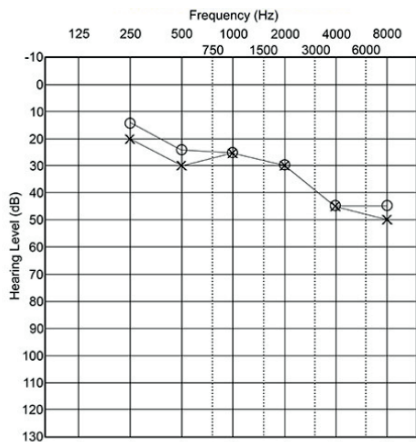
When all Xs and Os have been plotted, they are connected with a line for each ear. Sometimes both ears are plotted on the same graph, and sometimes there is a graph for each ear. Sounds falling on or below this line are the ones your child can hear.



<https://www.childrensmn.org/services/care-specialties-departments/ear-nose-throat-ent-facial-plastic-surgery/conditions-and-services/audiogram/>

## Examples of Audiograms

The following audiogram examples show different levels of hearing loss. These charts show audiogram results received after a hearing assessment.

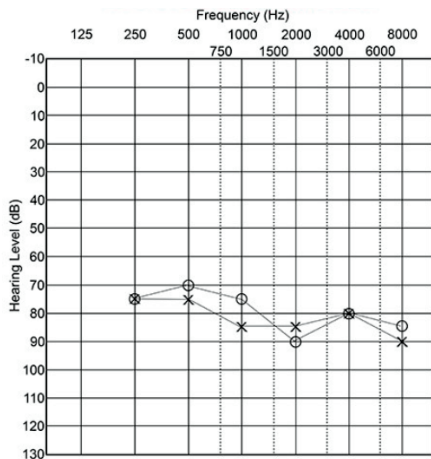
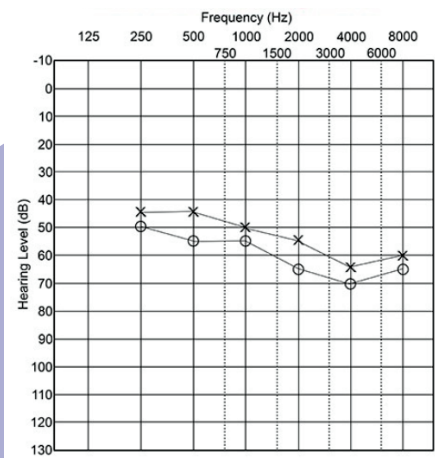


### Mild Hearing Loss

Children with hearing levels in the mild range may have trouble hearing and understanding soft speech, speech from a distance, or speech in a background noise.

### Moderate Hearing Loss

Children with hearing levels in the moderate range may have difficulty hearing regular speech, even at a close distance.



### Severe Hearing Loss

Children with hearing levels in the severe range may only hear very loud speech or loud environmental sounds, like a fire truck siren or a door slamming.



# What Does Hearing Loss Sound Like?

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## It's Different for Everyone

Two people with the same level of hearing loss can hear the world in very different ways, depending on which frequencies they are struggling to hear.

**High-Frequency Hearing Loss:** Someone with high-frequency hearing loss has more trouble with high-pitched sounds, such as “s” or “th” sounds. Certain words may sound less clear to them.

**Low-Frequency Hearing Loss:** Someone with low-frequency hearing loss would have the opposite problem — they struggle to hear lower-pitched sounds. Some words may sound tinny or harsh.

**Middle-Frequency Hearing Loss:** Some people experience hearing loss at middle frequencies. They might have trouble hearing certain speech sounds that fall into this range. This is called a “cookie bite” hearing loss and might make words sound muffled.

No matter what type and level of hearing loss your child has, their brain must work extra hard to try to fill in the missing sounds. It’s like they are constantly solving a puzzle. As a result, your child might feel tired after listening for a long time, for example at school, or at an appointment.



# Audiogram of Familiar Sounds

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## Sounds are all around us

We are used to hearing so many sounds that we often do not pay attention to what different things sound like, or how loud they are. Two main ways we can describe each sound are by its **pitch** (frequency) and **volume level** (loudness).

Everyday sounds vary in intensity or volume: from the sounds of breathing to the loud music at a concert. The table below shows examples of sounds of different intensities:

Soft Sounds	Loud Sounds
Breathing (10dB)	Traffic (80dB)
Rustling Leaves (20dB)	Noisy Cafeteria (80dB)
Whispering (25dB)	Blender (90dB)
Ticking Clock (30dB)	Screaming Baby (90dB)
	Car Horn (120dB)

Pitch or frequency describes how high or low a sound is and is measured in hertz (Hz). The higher the number, the higher a sound's pitch, or frequency. Here are some examples:

Low Pitch Sounds	High Pitch Sounds
Truck Engine (125 Hz)	Jet Engine (4000 Hz)
Lawn Mower (250 Hz)	Highest Piano Note (4186 Hz)
Dog Barking (250 Hz)	Bird Chirping (4000-8000 Hz)



# Sounds, Sounds Everywhere!

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## How to Help Your Child Identify and Recognize Sounds

We come across many sounds every day. Some of them we choose to ignore, and others require a response. Children with hearing loss may struggle to hear or interpret sounds in their environment. To help them understand the role different sounds play, their attention needs to be directed to the sound source.

When you point out where the sound is coming from and who or what made it, you help your child make the connection between the sound and the explanation for it. When you react to different sounds around you, explain your behaviour and how it is connected to what you heard so they can benefit and learn from your reactions. Here are some examples of how you can help your child identify and recognize different sounds:



- Tell your child that you heard something every time you respond to a noise (the phone, the microwave chime, the doorbell, etc.) Point to your ear and tell them you hear a sound (*"I hear something. Do you hear that?"*) Identify the sound (*"I hear the phone! The phone is ringing, let's answer it."*) Take your child to the source of the sound and allow them to listen to it. Label the sound again.
- Sometimes it can be difficult to know for sure what sounds your child can hear. Watch for signs that they heard a sound: they might stop what they are doing for a moment, flinch, or even cry. Your child might open their eyes wide or furrow their brow. Whenever you see your child's reaction to a sound, talk about it and show them where the sound is coming from.



## Pay Attention to the Sounds in Your Child's Environment

Be a model for your child: when you hear a sound that needs a reaction, respond to it, and draw attention to what you are doing and why. When the phone rings, you answer it; when the microwave chimes, you take out the food; when somebody knocks at the door, you open it. Become their “sound coach” so they can become aware of the sounds too! Some common sounds in your environment are listed below:

Household Sounds	Outside Sounds
Doorbell	Car Horn
Phone	Lawnmower
Running Water	Ambulance or Sirens
Toilet Flushing	Airplane
Washer and Dryer	Thunder
Television	Rain
Blender	Wind



People and Animal Sounds	Toy Sounds
Talking, Whispering	Squeaking
Laughing, Crying	Ringling
Singing, Whistling	Rattling
Coughing, Sneezing	Rolling
Dog Barking	Clicking
Cat Meowing	Musical Toys
Bird Chirping	Electronic Sounds





## **SECTION TWO**

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# **LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION**

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# The Earlier, The Better!

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## Language is an Essential Part of Human Connection

Although all species communicate in their own ways, humans are the only ones that have mastered the art of spoken language. It allows us to share our ideas, thoughts, and feelings with others. Children with hearing loss often fall behind their peers in learning to talk. It is important to help them learn language as early as possible to keep them on track with their language development. Professionals, like audiologists, speech-language pathologists, and auditory-verbal therapists, can help your child thrive, but the most important teacher in your child's early years is **YOU!**

### *DID YOU KNOW?*

- Over **90%** of deaf and hard of hearing babies are born into hearing families.
- Research shows that **the earlier** your child receives intervention for their hearing loss, **the better** the outcomes in terms of their communication and language development.
- Children need about **20,000 hours** of listening experience in the first five years of their life to be successful with reading and school later in life.
- On average, a child needs to hear every word **up to 12 times** before they learn and use it.



*Parents are*  
**LANGUAGE  
SUPERHEROES!**



# Speech and Language Milestones

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## Developing Speech and Language

Your child starts communicating with you long before they say their first word. Speech or language problems can make it difficult to do well at school and maintain friendships. It is important to know what your child should be able to do at each developmental stage so you can recognize delays and get help early.

A full chart of developmental milestones can be found on the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) website. To view these milestones, scan the QR code to the right or visit:



ASHA Speech and  
Language Developmental  
Milestones

<https://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/chart/>

Every child develops at their own pace. While these charts are useful, keep in mind that they show when the **majority** of children reach each milestone. By the time your child is at the top of the age range, they should have mastered most of the skills listed.

The next section has a list of useful tips that can help your child reach their speech and language milestones sooner.





# Everyday Communication Tips

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**Use amplification technology:** It is very important that your child is wearing their hearing devices for as long as they are awake. Various types of technology can also help improve communication in different listening environments.

**Get their attention:** Make sure your child is looking at you and knows you are talking to them.

**Be visible:** Make sure your child can clearly see your face and lips. Be aware of lighting on your face and shadows that can make it difficult to speech read. The light should be on your face, and not behind you.

**Do not cover your mouth:** To make it easier for your child to understand you, they need to see your lips and tongue. If you have a beard or a mustache, keep it well-trimmed and try to keep your hands away from your face.

**Reduce background noise:** Noise is the worst enemy for anyone with hearing loss. Even slight background sounds, like a fan blowing or traffic behind an open window, can make speech much harder to understand. A quiet environment is best for listening.

**Speak slower and slightly louder:** Make sure not to yell or exaggerate your speech. Shouting changes your lip movement, making speechreading very difficult.

**Repeat and rephrase:** If you have to repeat yourself more than once, try saying it a different way. The words you are using might have sounds or sound combinations that are especially hard for your child to hear. When you rephrase it, it might help them understand you better.

**Make sure your child is well-rested and takes listening breaks often:** For anyone who has hearing loss, listening uses up a lot more energy and can be very tiring. It is important for your child to have quiet time and take listening breaks as often as they need.



# Early Language: Learning to Listen

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## Learning to Listen Sounds

Every communication between you and your child helps them learn to recognize and say sounds, words, and phrases. **Learning to Listen (LTL) sounds** are connected to objects or actions and are easy for your child to hear and understand. When you use LTL sounds and phrases in your daily routines, they help your child develop language.

LTL sounds are not only useful, they are also fun! Most likely, you are using them with your child without even realizing it. When you say, “cow goes moo-moo” or “wave bye-bye!”, you are using LTL sounds! While they might seem simple, these sounds play a very important role in building your child’s brain and helping them develop their listening and language skills.

Below is a list of the LTL sound examples that you can use when speaking and playing with your child. Try and incorporate them into your daily interactions as much as you can. Your child's audiologist, auditory-verbal therapist or speech-language pathologist (SLP) can help you with strategies for practicing at home.

Vehicles			
Boat	<i>p, pu, pu</i>	Ambulance	<i>owowow</i>
Train	<i>oo, oo-oo-oo</i>	Fire Truck	<i>ee-oo-ee-oo</i>
Car/Truck	<i>beep beep b-rr-rr</i>	Police Car	<i>wowowo</i>
Bus	<i>bu-bu-bu</i>	Motorcycle	<i>mmmm</i>



Reference: Hearing First [hearingfirst.org](http://hearingfirst.org)

(Adapted from Simser, 2002, Estabrooks, 2006, Estabrooks & Birkenshaw-Fleming, 1994)

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## Animals

<b>Bear</b>	<i>grr-grr</i>	<b>Cow</b>	<i>mooooo</i>	<b>Horse</b>	<i>neigh tongue click</i>	<b>Mouse</b>	<i>squeak- squeak</i>
<b>Bird</b>	<i>tweet- tweet whistle</i>	<b>Crow</b>	<i>caw, caw</i>	<b>Lion</b>	<i>rooaaaar</i>	<b>Pig</b>	<i>oink-oink</i>
<b>Cat</b>	<i>meow</i>	<b>Dog</b>	<i>ruff-ruff bark-bark</i>	<b>Owl</b>	<i>hoo-hoo</i>	<b>Sheep</b>	<i>baa-aa-aa</i>
<b>Chicken</b>	<i>cluck</i>	<b>Duck</b>	<i>quack- quack</i>	<b>Monkey</b>	<i>ee-ee-ee</i>	<b>Snake</b>	<i>ssss</i>

## Nouns

<b>Baby Doll</b>	<i>mama wah-wah</i>	<b>Slide</b>	<i>up, up, up weeee</i>
<b>Bubbles</b>	<i>pop-pop</i>	<b>Water</b>	<i>pshhhhh</i>
<b>Clock</b>	<i>tic-toc t-t-t-t</i>	<b>Wheels</b>	<i>round and round</i>
<b>Clown</b>	<i>ha-ha-ha</i>	<b>Yo-yo</b>	<i>wheeee</i>



## Actions

<b>Crying</b>	<i>wah, wah</i>
<b>Eating</b>	<i>mmmmm</i>
<b>Sleeping</b>	<i>shhhhh</i>
<b>Smelling</b>	<i>mmm</i>



# Power Words

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## Multifunctional Power Words

While it is important for your child to be exposed to as many words as possible every day, some words pack more punch than others. Power words are multifunctional and can be used in a variety of ways in your child's early years. It is easy to add other words to them to expand language and add complexity. Below are some examples of power words and how to use them in everyday activities.

### More

*"More"* is a great word to use in routines and games and it is usually one of the first words children learn to say. But even before your child is using words to communicate, you can model this word often and make it part of their familiar vocabulary. Find opportunities to introduce this power word in all the things you do with your child, in different contexts and activities. Below are just some examples of how to use it:



**Mealtime:** Start with only giving your child a little bit of food and holding the rest out of their reach. When they gesture, whine, or indicate in any other way that they want more, you can say *"more"* and then wait to see if they respond. Eventually, they will start repeating the word after you. When your child starts saying *"more"* themselves, you can add to it to expand: more strawberries, more milk, more pizza, and so on.

**Play:** Toys with multiple pieces are great for practicing *"more."* Give your child just a single block or puzzle piece and hold onto the rest. Wait for them to notice and present the next piece saying *"more!"* After a while, pause longer to give your child a chance to try and say it themselves. When they start using the word *"more"*, you can then add the toy name: more cars, more balls, more blocks. You can also give them choices for which toy they want and label attributes like size and colour (big car, red block, etc.)



## Open

It is so hard for tiny hands to open things! This is why “open” is another great word to use often with your child. Here are a few examples of ways to use “open” to develop language:

**Mealtime:** Use a little sabotage: instead of giving your child a peeled banana or an opened pack of crackers, give it to them unopened and wait. When they gesture or vocalize for it to be opened, model the word. Once they start using the word “open”, you can expand by adding the name of the object they want to be opened, or the person they are asking: open crackers, open jar, momma open, you open, and so on.

**Play:** When playing with a toy that has doors or reading a book with flaps, say “open” before opening a flap or a door on the toy. This, once again, gives you an opportunity to expect and develop language. Once the word is mastered, don’t open doors or flaps until your child asks for it by using the power word. Try looking for more opportunities throughout the day for them to use the magic word: getting in and out of the car, unbuckling the car seat or their stroller, opening a lid on a pot to serve dinner – so many different ways to incorporate “open” into your routines!



## Go

Your child is surrounded by things that “go”! It is a great word to practice during playtime with toys that move, like cars, balls, and wind-up toys. Whenever you play with your child, hold the toy and count: “1, 2, 3...” and then exclaim “Gooooo!” as you roll, throw, or activate it. This is also a great practice to use during social play, like pushing your child on a swing or in a stroller, or when spinning, tickling, or jumping with them. Once the word is familiar and they can say it themselves, you can practice wait time to give your child an opportunity to ask for a turn in a game, or for you to make something “go.”

# Narrate Your Life

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## Talk About Everything You Do Each Day

Every part of your daily routine can become an opportunity to teach your child language and vocabulary. Bath time, mealtime, getting dressed, grocery shopping or packing a suitcase – all ordinary things you do every day are filled with new words and concepts.

### **Remember to use real names for things:**

Avoid using "it," "that," or other generalizing words. Don't be afraid to repeat yourself: children need to hear a word up to **12 times** before they can fully internalize it. Also, keep in mind that there are numerous specific words for similar things. Take, for example, birds. There are many different types of birds, such as pigeons, seagulls, crows, and eagles. Use the correct word!

### **Get your child involved with the activity while you are talking about it:**

When you are preparing a meal and talking about the ingredients and the process, let your child help. Give them a spoon or a whisk to engage them. When they are old enough, they can help prepare the meal by cutting, pouring, stirring, and setting the table.

At bath time, allow your child to fill the bathtub and put all the toys in. Try and talk about everything they do, rather than doing it all for them. This way they feel like they are in charge, which helps them build independence skills as well as learn language in a meaningful way.



# Other Strategies for Teaching to Listen and Talk

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## Use Different Techniques

There are many techniques professionals use to help children learn to listen and talk. As a parent, you are your child's first and most important teacher. Below are some strategies you can incorporate into your daily life. Their purpose is to help your child develop their listening, talking, thinking, and reading skills.

**Wait time:** Your child needs time to process the information they hear before they can respond or show understanding. Children with hearing loss often need extra processing time. It is important to pause after a word, question, or direction to allow them time to come up with a reply. Try waiting 8-10 seconds before repeating, rephrasing, or taking another turn. It might seem like a very long silence but try thinking about it as a necessary part of communication, and not an empty space.

**Listening first:** When you introduce a new toy or object, talk about it first. Say the name of the object and what it is for before showing it to your child. Children who are hard of hearing are used to using their vision to orientate themselves in the world. By talking about the toy first, you help them build their listening skills.

**Auditory (listening) sandwich:** Similar to the listening first strategy, but it also adds repetition to further enhance the word or concept you are trying to teach. The "bread" of this sandwich is listening or an auditory signal. The "filling" of the sandwich is a visual cue or something else that helps your child understand what they heard. For example, when reading a book, ask "*Where is the dog?*" without pointing. Wait and give your child time to process the information and respond. Then ask again and point to the animal, "*Where's the dog? There's the dog!*" Then say the word again without pointing, "*There's the dog. You found the dog.*"

**Acoustic highlighting:** Just like using a highlighter to make certain words stand out, acoustic highlighting makes the words and phrases we say more noticeable. There are different ways to do that. We can highlight a certain word by pausing before and after it. In the following example, think of the asterisk (\*) as a pause: *“Pick the big, \* red \* block.”* Another way you can highlight a sound is by elongating it. For example, hold the /s/ sound at the beginning of the word “snake” – *“sssake”*. Exaggerate the /t/ sound at the end of the word *“ca t ”*.

**Acoustic bombardment:** This is a way to draw attention to a word you want to teach. By using the same word over and over, it becomes more prominent and “pops” when the child is trying to listen. For example, if you are teaching the word “car”: *“Where is the **car**? I see your **car** - beep beep! The **car** goes fast - vroom. May I have the **car**? I want the red **car**. Beep beep – watch out, **car**! Oh no, the **car** crashed! **Car, car**, are you okay? I think the **car** is wrecked.”*

**Modelling:** You are your child’s most important teacher! By modelling vocabulary and concepts, you give them the opportunity to learn by listening to you. That is why it is important to model the language the way you want your child to learn:

- use proper names for things and pay attention to your grammar;
- speak at an appropriate volume (louder than normal but not shouting) and not too fast;
- articulate your speech, especially the sounds your child might have trouble hearing and pronouncing;
- use varied and rich vocabulary: use synonyms, explain things in different ways, and find as many words as you can to describe objects.





# Reading Aloud and Why It is Important

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## Stories are Magical

If you ask anybody what their favourite childhood books are, they likely have no trouble remembering stories read to them when they were little. Something magical happens when people read out loud together: it creates a shared experience, highlights the stories that shape our values, and places books at the center of our lives, even if only for a short time. Books are great for any child, but for those with hearing loss, they are especially valuable. Here are five reasons why you and your child should read aloud together.



**Reading aloud builds vocabulary:** When we read aloud, children encounter new words. They also learn to pronounce unfamiliar words, which they might not otherwise hear in their everyday life. Multiple studies have shown that a well-developed vocabulary is linked to better school performance.

**Reading aloud improves active listening:** When you read aloud to your child, their mind concentrates on both what the words sound like, and what they mean. This is a serious workout for their brain that strengthens listening and comprehension skills. Reading aloud encourages active listening, which goes beyond simply hearing words and involves fully internalizing them.

**Reading aloud strengthens fluency:** Fluency is a word we hear a lot, but it can be hard to understand what exactly it means. Simply put, it is speaking or reading smoothly and accurately, not too slow, or too fast, and with good expression. When you read aloud to your child, you become their model for fluent reading and speaking.

**Reading aloud reduces stress and makes us happy:** When you read books to your child, it makes both of you feel more positive and relaxed. During reading, we become so absorbed in a story that we forget our surroundings and take part in visual, auditory, and emotional time travel. In this state, we are not only more open to learning, but we are also practicing empathy and building emotional resilience.

**Reading aloud can improve working memory:** Working memory is the part of our brain that holds and uses information short-term. Examples of using working memory in our daily life include remembering someone's email address, asking for directions and remembering them until we reach our destination, learning the name of someone new and keeping it in mind throughout the conversation. When you read out loud, you help build and improve your child's working memory.



# Make the Most of Reading

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Make the most of reading with your child by following these helpful tips:

**Be enthusiastic:** Enthusiasm is contagious: when your child sees how excited you are about reading and learning, they are more likely to feel the same way about it. Try to make reading a fun part of your day. Be silly, do voices, look at pictures – anything that helps your child enjoy it!

**Repeat, repeat, repeat:** Books help your child learn new vocabulary. Remember that a child needs to hear a new word as often as **12 times** before it is truly internalized. Repeat the new vocabulary as much as possible as you explore a book. Don't limit yourself to how many times the word appears on the page. Spend time talking about the pictures and repeat the new words over and over.

**Take your time:** Your child might be interested in certain pages of a book more than others. Don't rush these learning moments! Allow yourself to spend extra time on their favourite pages to engage your child and repeat language. It is okay if that means you don't finish the book in one sitting – focus on the journey, not the destination!

**Avoid making books responsible for replacing screen time:** Reading and using technology are separate activities. Build time into your child's day when you read aloud with them, and a separate screen time. It is important to avoid saying "We have to put away your device because it is time to read." This could build a negative attitude towards reading and associate it with giving up a favourite activity. Try finding fun and engaging books and magazines that reflect your child's interests!





**Connect with your child:** Reading is a great way to connect with your child. Make books a part of your daily routines. This can be a wonderful way to start conversations about your child's day, find real-life connections to topics you are reading about, and learn new things together.

**Get curious:** Many books introduce information that is new and unfamiliar to you and your child. Go ahead and express your curiosity: ask questions, form theories, and go on a quest to learn more about the topic together. This is a great opportunity to show your child ways to research and clarify information and teach them to problem-solve when they don't know something.

**Take the pressure off:** Make reading casual and fun, it doesn't have to be a formal activity. It is okay to start several books throughout the day and not finish them. Don't pressure your child to look directly at the book while you are reading, they can still listen while they are playing and moving around. Make the most of every small reading opportunity, even if it's not complete or perfect.







## **SECTION THREE**

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# **ADVOCACY AND FINDING SUPPORT**

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# What is Advocacy?

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## Introduction to Advocacy

**Advocacy** is promoting and defending somebody's rights, needs, and interests. It means taking a stance to make sure your voice is heard, and your child's needs are met.

Many people can speak up for their own rights, needs and interests, but some find it difficult. Children with hearing loss often struggle to speak up for themselves or don't have the ability to do it. You know and understand your child better than anyone else. If people are making decisions for or about your child, make sure these decisions are in your child's best interests by being their advocate. Most importantly though, your child needs to learn to advocate for themselves, and it's never too early to start fostering these skills.



## Steps to Advocate for a Child with Hearing Loss

**Understand the problem at hand:** Make sure you have a clear understanding of the issues your child is facing. For example, your child's daycare or school might need acoustic tiles to reduce echo, Hushh-ups® for the chairs to decrease the background noise, and a listening system to ensure your child is included in all activities throughout the day.

**Understand your child's needs:** If you understand your child's specific needs and the supports that can help them, you'll be in a better position to speak up for them. Work with the child to identify what challenges they may face and if they need any support at daycare, school, or during other activities.

**Think about what you want for your child:** To make an informed decision about what's best for your child, you need to be informed about the possible issues and solutions. Find as much information as you can about their hearing loss and the challenges your child might be facing on a day-to-day basis. There might also be solutions that you haven't thought of, so try to find a community of like-minded individuals who can help you and your child be knowledgeable about things that can help. CHHA-NL is a great place to start!

You need to be sure that what you want is in your child's best interests. This includes thinking about any possible negative consequences and how they could be managed. For example, while inclusion is important and you don't want your child to miss out on any class activities, could they also need some periods of the day in a quieter area with fewer children around?

**Present a solution:** Presenting a solution is more effective than complaining. For example, you might say, "I understand this is a challenging situation. I want to work closely with you and other professionals to make sure my child's learning needs are met using the resources you have."

Asking questions can also help. For example, you might say, "Can you let me know what adjustments you're making so that my child is included in activities?"

Whenever you are discussing challenging topics with professionals, remember to maintain a calm and positive attitude. If your child is with you during these discussions, they are watching you and learning how to handle difficult conversations. Remember, you are not just your child's advocate, you are also their role model.





# Fostering Independence and Teaching Self-Advocacy

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The concept of self-advocacy can be hard for parents - not because they don't believe in its value, but because they are used to advocating on behalf of their children. Parents are often their children's main (and sometimes only) advocates, but it is important to remember that, eventually, children need to be able to stand up for themselves. When parents let their children become independent, they allow the skill of self-advocacy to develop and grow. Only by letting go can you ensure that your child becomes the capable and confident person they are meant to be.

When you think of your child's future, what is your vision? Parents usually want their children to become strong, independent, and thriving adults. Providing your hard of hearing child with the toolkit to advocate for themselves is fundamental to their future success.

For your child to build confidence and feel comfortable advocating for their needs in a classroom or other social situations, they need to feel capable. To develop this feeling, they must be given the opportunity to do things for themselves. Fostering independence across many routines and activities from a very young age will build your child's ability to advocate for their hearing needs as they grow.



# Tips for Fostering Independence at Home

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**Don't try to read your child's mind:** Make an effort to look for opportunities for your child to be more independent: instead of doing something for them, wait for your child to indicate that they need something. They might gesture, make a sound, cry, or grab your hand and bring you somewhere. This not only offers an opportunity to model language for advocacy (for example, “*Can you help me?*”, “*I need a....*”, etc.), but it also gives your child a chance to try something on their own in a safe space, where they know you are there to help them if they need it.

Here are some examples of what you can do:

- give them yogurt, but “forget” to give them a spoon;
- have them attempt to tie their shoes or zip their coat before doing it for them;
- let them participate in packing their lunch, or an overnight bag for a sleepover.



**Expect your child to help with chores:** Involving your child in household chores at a young age establishes expectations for them to be self-sufficient as they grow. It is never too early to introduce them to the idea of helping out: while folding clothes or preparing food, place your infant in a highchair or a bouncy seat near you and talk to them about what you are doing.

As your child gets older, assign them some chores that are age appropriate. Remember that when they practice independence, things can get messy! It's okay if your child doesn't fold their clothes, prepare food, or pack a bag as neatly as you do. Praise them for taking part and doing their best to help – you can always fix it later!

Praising your child's efforts helps them feel responsible and confident. Let them know how enthusiastic and excited you are about their help; this fosters a positive attitude towards household tasks and builds independence.

**Expect your child to clean up after themselves:** Depending on the age of your child, expecting them to independently put away all their toys or clothes might not be reasonable. However, it is very important to involve them in tidying up from a very early age.

Here are some tips that can help engage your child and establish a tidying routine for them:

- sing a clean-up song;
- use a timer;
- signal clean-up time with a visual (such as flicking the lights);
- give your child a choice of what to clean up.

**Have your child participate in daily listening and equipment checks:**

Listening checks and equipment maintenance are essential parts of living with hearing loss. The earlier your child learns about their amplification technology, the more confident they will be advocating for their listening needs at school and in other settings.

Starting when your child is a toddler, get them used to daily listening checks. Make it fun by using toys or brightly coloured picture cards. Let them watch as you change hearing aid batteries, clean earmolds, and blow out the tubes, while you talk through what you are doing and why. As your child gets older, support them as they start doing these daily maintenance tasks on their own. Help them become the boss of their hearing loss!



## Ling 6 Sounds

The sounds /ah/, /ee/, /oo/, /sh/, /ss/, and /mm/ are used to check that your child is hearing the range of speech sounds needed to learn language.

ah



oo



eeee



sh



ssss



mmm



<https://soundspeechnj.com/blog/2019/7/24/what-the-heck-are-the-ling-six-sounds>

**Use sabotage to practice self-advocacy skills:** Before your child can advocate for their needs in a classroom or other social settings, they need to practice these skills in a safe and comfortable space. There is no better place to do it than in your own home, during familiar activities you do together. It is important for your child to learn what they need to access auditory information successfully.

Some things they must know are:

- When and how to ask for accommodations (“Can you speak louder?” “Can you come closer?” “Can you look at me and say it again?”)
- When and how to ask for repetition (“Can you tell me again?”)



Encourage your child to correct you when you are not doing your best to communicate with them. Use sabotage by calling their name from a distance, whispering when you give them a direction, covering your mouth when asking a question, or giving them their hearing aids without batteries in them. It is a good idea to make it a game at first and to have fun with it until your child feels comfortable asking for what they need. When they know what they need to hear better, and how to ask for it, you can use sabotage in your daily activities, and ask other family members and friends to do it as well.



# Self-Advocacy Skill Development Timeline

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It can be difficult to know what self-advocacy skills are appropriate for your child's age as they grow. To give you a better idea, here are some suggestions for when different skills are usually developed by most children from preschool to grade 4.

## Preschool:

- Able to put their own hearing devices on, and report any problems as they occur (dead battery, crackling, etc.)
- Can ask others to repeat themselves when they did not hear what was said.

## Kindergarten:

- Can recognize the effect of distance on hearing: knows that it is easier to hear and understand speech the closer they are to the speaker.
- Able to select or move to an appropriate seat closer to the teacher to hear better.
- Can appropriately ask for repetition of messages missed (i.e., slower, more clearly, louder).

## Grade 1:

- Can recognize the effect of background noise in their learning environment and act on it to improve listening conditions: by asking the teacher to close the classroom door, moving away from the noise.
- Able to use agreed-upon signals with their teacher to let them know about problems with listening or understanding.
- Able to remind the teacher to turn on the FM/DM microphone, and request that the microphone be passed around when other people are talking.
- Knows simple names and purposes of hearing device parts, and what can go wrong with them (no sound, breaking up, distorted, etc.)





**Grade 2:**

- Can describe the purpose of the FM/DM system to a classroom teacher, and explain how to use it in simple terms, with assistance.
- Increased awareness of recognizing when they have missed information – can answer a question: “How do you know that you didn’t hear, or didn’t hear everything?”
- Able to report on difficult listening environments: “When is it hard to listen/hear/understand?”
- Recognizes when a question/direction doesn’t make sense.
- Knows how to use basic communication repair strategies – can take the part that they heard and turn it into a clarification question.
- Better able to listen in noise.
- Can perform basic troubleshooting when their hearing device is not working.

**Grade 3:**

- Able to describe the purpose and appropriate use of their FM/DM system to a classroom teacher, with oversight.
- Can identify challenging listening situations in school.
- Able to identify the source of the listening difficulty: can tell if it was due to the speaker, listener, or environmental issues.
- Knows the self-advocacy strategies necessary to solve most common difficult listening situations; can use these strategies in some situations.

**Grade 4:**

- Able to have a discussion with the classroom teacher to describe the purpose and appropriate use of the FM/DM system, set up the signal system, and ask for accommodations, with assistance.
- Can identify challenging listening situations and use appropriate self-advocacy strategies.
- Knows how to use advanced communication repair strategies (i.e., ask for background or clarification) when they need an explanation in school or other social situations.
- Can correctly identify listening challenges in school and social settings and use appropriate self-advocacy strategies to resolve the issues.

# Improving Your Child's Social Skills

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Kindergarten teachers report that 20% of children entering school do not have the socialization skills necessary to be successful at school. Because children with hearing loss can miss subtle social cues and incidental language, they are at higher risk for having social skill deficits. This is why it is very important to pay attention to your child's social development.

Social skills include:

- responding to social cues;
- saying hello and goodbye;
- making eye contact, smiling, being polite;
- having interesting things to say;
- cooperating by taking turns;
- responding appropriately to questions;
- being sensitive to the feelings of others;
- problem-solving;
- controlling aggression and other inappropriate behaviours;
- acknowledging other people's comments.

One of the most important skills your child needs at school and in other social situations is to appropriately start and carry on a dialogue. By the time they enter kindergarten, your child should know the common rules of conversation:

- agree to pay attention to who is talking;
- no one person does all the talking;
- participate in choosing and developing a topic;
- take turns in an orderly fashion;
- add information relevant to the topic (related to what you were talking about);
- provide enough information to convey the message without being too "chatty".



Children with hearing loss often have a difficult time reading and sending appropriate social cues which may make communication with adults and peers very hard. **Social cues** are the signals people send through body language and expressions. When people roll their eyes, wink while saying something, or use a sarcastic tone of voice, most kids will get the message. But children with hearing loss often miss those nonverbal cues, and that can lead them to misunderstand people and misread situations. It is important to explain what people's facial expressions mean, and how the communication partner's mood might affect how they answer a question. Talk about how different situations affect a person's body language, discuss how people might express different moods and emotions, for example:

- "I'm really busy right now"
- "Wait just a second, and I will pay attention to you"
- "I'm upset!"
- "I'm happy to see you and spend time with you"

Here are some tips that can help you improve your child's social skills:

**Teach:** Remember, children with hearing loss miss out on incidental learning through overhearing other people's conversations, TV dialogues, etc. It is important to explicitly teach them what they should do, be aware of, wait for, and think about in different situations.

**Use Self-Talk:** Talk through your thought process and emotions in different situations, so your child can be aware of what you are thinking, and how it affects your choices and how you act.

**Model:** Use good social skills yourself, role-play with your child, and provide the words for what they might be feeling or thinking.



**Pay attention to how your child interacts with others:** At the end of the day, you might want to revisit the events of the day and talk about what you observed, what other people did, and how your child reacted and why. Try to stay positive, providing feedback, not criticism.

**Reinforce good social behaviour:** Bring up the accomplishments, not just the shortcomings. It is important to be specific about what your child did well - maybe they remembered a tip you gave them recently, or they improved on a skill they used to struggle with. Praise their level of effort regardless of the outcome.

**Encourage them:** Sometimes encouragement works better than praise. Say things like “I know you can do it!”, “Give it your best try”. Encouragement boosts self-esteem and gives your child confidence to try new skills in situations they might not yet feel comfortable with.

When your child has a social misstep:

- immediately model what they should have said/done, using specific words and phrases;
- explain how your child’s words or behaviour made you (or another conversation partner) feel: ignored, angry, frustrated;
- describe how your child’s actions can be interpreted by others in a way they might not have been intended (i.e., by not answering, someone may think you don’t care about them or their opinion).





# Building Your Support Team

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There may be challenges in your child’s path to better hearing, but you don’t have to face them alone! It is important to have a strong team to support you and your child as they are growing up. Family and friends can offer invaluable help, but there are also many professionals who can provide information, advice, and knowledge. Knowing what role each of them plays and their area of expertise can help you navigate your child’s experience outside of the home. So, who are your teammates?

**Audiologist:** An audiologist is a licensed hearing healthcare professional who specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of hearing loss and balance disorders in adults and children. You can think of an audiologist as a “hearing specialist”. After the initial diagnosis, the audiologist will monitor your child's hearing levels and make sure their hearing aid(s) or cochlear implant(s) are working as they should. They can provide information about hearing assistive technology and accessories that are compatible with your child’s amplification technology. Make sure to schedule and attend all necessary appointments.



**Auditory-Verbal Therapist:** Auditory-Verbal Therapy (AVT) is an early intervention method that supports parents in learning the skills and knowledge necessary to develop their child’s talking, thinking and social skills through listening.

**ENT** is an ear, nose, and throat doctor who specializes in everything having to do with those parts of the body. They’re also called **otolaryngologists**. ENT doctors can help with ear infections, wax build-up, tinnitus (ringing in the ears), and many other ear-related conditions your child may experience.

**Itinerant Teacher:** An itinerant teacher is a certified teacher for d/Deaf and hard of hearing students. They are required to have at least a Master's degree in education with a concentration in teaching and supporting students with varying degrees of hearing loss. Their expertise includes the following areas:

- how hearing loss affects language development;
- impact and use of assistive hearing technology (including hearing aids, cochlear implants, and FM/DM devices);
- literacy development and how it differs from children with normal hearing;
- impact of hearing loss on social/emotional development and self-esteem;
- hearing accessibility at school and other settings;
- teaching techniques for building self-advocacy skills and coping strategies.



Since an itinerant teacher isn't with a student all day, their role includes coaching and consulting general education staff and parents in the above mentioned areas. Itinerant teachers follow children from preschool age all the way to high school graduation. It is important for you to know your child's itinerant teacher and have a good working relationship with them.

**A "Hearing Buddy"** is a friend who can help your child follow along while doing activities by telling them what they may be missing.

**Other deaf or hard of hearing individuals** can help understand and guide your child's experience of living with hearing loss. There are support groups available, and they can be very helpful to you and your child by providing information, lived experience, moral support, and friendship.



**CHHA-NL** is always there to assist and support your family. They offer education and resources in areas of hearing loss management, hearing assistive technology, and other hearing loss-related supports and referrals. CHHA-NL offers many programs and services that can help meet your child's needs in all areas and all stages of life.

**School Staff:** Once your child starts school, your team will grow even larger. It is important to include school staff in discussions about your child's hearing needs and connect them with existing members of your team. School staff include:

- **Classroom teacher** can provide support by using hearing assistive equipment (an FM/DM or a sound field system), and by making sure that all classroom materials and activities are fully hearing-accessible (captioning, visuals, printed notes, etc.)
- **Principal** can assist in setting up the necessary accommodations for your child and make sure that all school activities are accessible and inclusive. For example, morning announcements can be made by video with captioning, or provided in print form; echo in school can be reduced by using acoustic tiles; a sound field system and captioning can be used in the gym for assemblies and school community events.
- **Guidance counsellor** can provide emotional support and ensure your child's well-being at school.







## **SECTION FOUR**

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# **CHANGES AND TRANSITIONS**

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# Ensuring Smooth Transitions

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As the saying goes, the only constant in life is change. As your child grows, they meet new people and experience new environments and activities. These changes, even the positive ones, can be very stressful. You can make the transition from the familiar and comfortable home to a busy daycare or classroom easier by ensuring that the new setting is appropriate for a child with hearing loss. Some tips for successful transitions include:

- Research and visit preschools and daycares in your neighbourhood. This will help you get a feel for the place and give you information on the layout of the building.
- Tell teachers and staff that your child has hearing loss, give information on their hearing level and type, and what amplification technology they are using. Communicate your child's likes, dislikes, strengths and needs. The more familiar the staff is with your child, the easier it will be for them to meet their individual needs.
- Meet your child's teacher or daycare provider in person and figure out the best method of communication (by phone, text, or email – whatever works best for both of you). It is a good idea to meet with the teacher before your child's official start, so you can ask and answer questions, and explain what accommodations your child needs. Regular check-ins with teachers and staff keep you informed of your child's progress and allow you to address any concerns they may have.
- Prepare your child by talking about the transition well in advance. Talk to them about the people at the new place, things they will be doing, the routines, etc. You can find books about starting daycare or kindergarten at your local library, or create your own social story.
- Foster independence and encourage your child to advocate for themselves. Practice caring for your child's hearing technology at home. Let them do things on their own with your support. Talk to them about things they can do to hear better, or ways they can ask for help in the classroom. Practicing these skills at home builds your child's competence and makes them feel confident to take care of their own hearing needs.

# Evaluating Group Settings for Children with Hearing Loss

Children with hearing loss have unique listening and language-learning needs, and they must be considered when choosing their daycare or school. You and your child’s care team should think about all aspects of the educational setting when choosing their placement. For your child to continue developing their listening and speaking skills, the following elements should be present at daycare or school:

<b>Listening Needs Checklist*</b>	
	Through appropriate classroom management techniques and activities, the staff generally keeps the classroom quiet enough that children can clearly hear anybody who’s speaking
	The classroom has acoustic treatments, such as acoustic tiles in the ceiling, carpeting and/or chair Hushh-ups®, sound-absorbent surfaces on the walls (e.g. bulletin boards), sound-absorbent window coverings, silent or very quiet heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning (HVAC) system
	The classroom is in a quiet spot away from traffic and hallway noise, the cafeteria, the band room, and the gym
	The child has properly set up FM/DM equipment and/or sound field system for use in all large and small group activities
	The teacher is committed to wearing the FM/DM transmitter with appropriate microphone placement and uses it in all settings, when appropriate
	Training for all school/daycare staff is given before the child’s first day by an itinerant teacher for the d/Deaf and hard of hearing, an educational audiologist, or another knowledgeable professional about the FM/DM system and your child’s needs related to hearing loss
	One adult at the school takes responsibility for daily checks of your child’s personal hearing technology and FM/DM equipment, as well as for troubleshooting and requesting additional technical help when needed
	In case your child’s personal FM/DM malfunctions, the school has provisions for loaner FM/DM equipment to be provided as soon as possible

The hearing status of children with hearing loss needs to be closely monitored: if parents or professionals who work with the child notice any change in the child’s hearing thresholds or listening abilities, adjustments must be made in their technology as soon as possible.

An audiologist who specializes in supporting children with hearing loss in an educational setting (sometimes called an educational audiologist) is an important part of your child’s team. They are responsible for selecting, fitting, and monitoring the proper use of your child’s amplification technology. Typically, preschoolers need to have their hearing tested at least two to four times a year, and possibly even more often when parents or teachers are concerned about changes in the child’s responses.

### Developing Spoken Language Through Listening Checklist

	Intervention services are available from qualified professionals who have experience working with children with hearing loss (e.g., an itinerant teacher for the d/Deaf and hard of hearing, AVT, SLP, etc.)
	A quiet space needs to be available for sessions
	School staff expect to work as a team with parents and other professionals so that they can assist with pre- and post-teaching, as well as with vocabulary building; it is important for staff to understand that, even if the child is at daycare or school full-time, it only accounts for about 25% of their waking hours!

### Providing Good Models of Spoken Language Checklist

	The teacher’s usual rate, pitch, loudness, and articulation make their speech easy to hear and understand
	The teacher is animated and uses facial expressions and gestures to help preschoolers understand better
	At least half of the children in the class are typically developing children, whose behaviour and spoken language are within normal limits for their age

### Teaching Appropriate Peer-to-Peer Interaction Checklist

	The school offers frequent opportunities for your child to play and interact with typically developing peers
	Adults are available to help children with their interactions, but they step back and let children figure things out on their own, when appropriate

## Developing a Rich Language Environment Checklist

	The teacher often encourages children to speak in class
	Most activities and conversations are based around developmentally appropriate activities that reflect children's interests and curiosity
	Play centers, tables and chairs are arranged in a way that encourages verbal interaction in small groups
	The teacher repeats and/or rephrases other children's comments and questions
	The teacher checks for comprehension without asking "Do you understand?"
	The teacher adjusts their pace according to students' understanding

## Other Questions to Consider

	Where will my child sit in the classroom/group?
	Has any of the staff ever worked with a child with hearing loss before?
	Who will support my child in getting their devices and equipment ready for class each day?
	Are the school staff and the classroom teacher open to making small changes in the classroom to support optimal auditory access (i.e., Hushh-ups® on the chairs, mats or carpets to absorb sound, changing the furniture around to minimize wide open areas)
	Is there a quiet place in the school where my child can go if they need a break?
	What form of communication happens between home and school?
	Is it possible to set my child up with a peer or two in the classroom for them to rely on for help?

\* <https://successforkidswithhearingloss.com/preparing-for-your-child-to-start-school/>



# Tips for Teachers

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Here are some easy tips you can share with your child's classroom teacher to help improve hearing accessibility at school.

**Find out what hearing loss sounds like:** Check out audio simulations of hearing loss online to help you understand what listening is like in the classroom for students with hearing loss. Scan the QR code to the right or follow the link below to view one of the hearing loss audio simulators.



Online Audiometry  
Hearing Loss Simulator

<https://www.checkhearing.org/hearingLoss-simulator.php>

**Make seating changes:** Students with hearing loss may need to sit closer to the front of the class to speech read (read lips) or hear more clearly. Also, consider arranging chairs in the classroom in a U-shape or circle so that students with hearing loss can better interact with classmates.

**Minimize background noise:** This may mean finding quiet areas for a student to work. Consider closing the doors and windows while teaching. Pay attention to heating/cooling/HVAC systems or fans, turn them off whenever possible. Use acoustic treatments (Hushh-ups®) on the bottoms of chairs and desks.

**Improve classroom acoustics:** Acoustic panels can greatly improve hearing accessibility in a classroom by absorbing noise. Some examples of acoustic treatments are cork bulletin boards, rugs, and drapes on windows. Classrooms with a lot of hard surfaces cause echo which can make it hard to understand speech, so adding noise-absorbing materials makes a big difference.



**Use an FM/DM system:** This listening device helps a child with hearing loss hear their teachers better in a noisy classroom. To use the system, a teacher wears a microphone/transmitter and the student can hear their voice directly through their hearing aids or cochlear implants (some hearing instruments may require a receiver).



YouTube: Hearing Aid - FM Simulation

To watch a video and see firsthand how much difference the use of FM/DM makes in the classroom, scan the QR code to the right or follow the link below:

**<https://youtu.be/1I37IzLIgQU?si=UVpF8Y00U15loyTU>**

**Face students when you are speaking:** Most students with hearing loss use speechreading. Face them when you talk, speak slowly and clearly, and don't shout. As long as they have their devices on, you can speak in a clear and normal tone. While teaching, it is important to **not** pace back and forth while talking. It limits a student's ability to speech read and can be very distracting.

**Use lots of pictures, graphics, and text labels:**

Many students with hearing loss are visual learners, so it is helpful to use visuals or print materials as much as possible. Remember to not teach if the lights are off during the video. Students cannot read your lips in the dark!

**Repeat and rephrase:** If you find your student struggles to understand what you are saying, or is asking you to repeat yourself often, it might be helpful to reword the message. Depending on the student's hearing level, there may be certain words/sounds that are more challenging to hear.

**Use technology to make learning easier:** This includes having captioning on any videos used in the classroom, and using speech-to-text software on computers and tablets. For more ideas, ask the student's family, their audiologist, itinerant teacher, or CHHA-NL.



**Talk about and celebrate differences:**

Students with hearing loss want to be accepted - just like everyone else. But sometimes they're targeted by others who see them as "different." Talk about and celebrate differences, and focus on the interests that kids share. Be mindful of bullying and keep a zero-tolerance policy for that behaviour.

**Become a hearing coach:** Teach all students how to be good communicators in class and during group work. Remind them to speak one at a time, get the attention of the student with hearing loss before speaking to them, and to not cover their mouth when speaking.

**Listening breaks:** Incorporate listening breaks during the school day. Listening in noise using hearing technology is hard work. Taking frequent short breaks in a quiet environment helps improve your student's focus and attention.

**Class participation:** If there is no pass-around microphone for classmates to use, repeat questions and comments from students, so the FM/DM mic can pick it up and your student can hear it clearly. Remember to also repeat back announcements – although usually loud, the intercom system can distort the sound and make it very hard to understand.

**Check-in:** Get in the habit of checking in with students with hearing loss regularly. This way you can ensure they understand the instructions and get all the information they need to be successful in the classroom. Oftentimes, students with hearing loss do not want to call attention to their difficulties and are hesitant to ask for repetition or clarification in front of the whole class. This is why it's a good idea to give them a chance to ask all questions and give feedback one-on-one.





# Hearing Loss and Extracurricular Activities

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Extracurricular activities and sporting events are an important part of a child's educational and social experience. Many lessons about teamwork, responsibility, winning and losing can be learned in after-school activities. All children should be able to access these extracurricular activities in the least restrictive way, the same as educational activities at school. The use of hearing assistive technology (HAT) is a critical part of making after-school activities more accessible to children with hearing loss. Technology, special communication strategies, and other accommodations can help create a more level playing field for hard of hearing children. Reach out to CHHA-NL to find out what kind of technology and accommodations would be most helpful for your child's particular activities.







## **SECTION FIVE**

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# **HOW CHHA-NL CAN SUPPORT YOU**

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# CHHA-NL Programs and Services

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We at CHHA-NL are here to support you and your child every step of the way. Below is an outline of some programs and services that you might find useful. Our offerings are constantly changing to meet the needs of our clients, to see the full list of the most current programs and services, please visit our website by scanning the QR code on the back cover, or visiting [www.chha-nl.ca](http://www.chha-nl.ca)

Some of our programs and services include:

**Listen and Learn:** An online video series that complements this guidebook and provides more invaluable tips for your child's language and social skill development (see next page).

**ARC (Advocacy, Readiness, Connection):** A virtual program for hard of hearing high school students where they learn important life skills and earn up to \$1500 cash reward.

**Scholarships:** CHHA-NL offers several scholarships for post-secondary students with hearing loss and individuals pursuing studies in the field of audiology.

**Post-secondary FM/DM sales:** A funding opportunity for youths with hearing loss pursuing post-secondary education to help pay for an FM/DM system.

**Alert and Aware:** A program designed to provide a free or partially funded portable fire alert system for people with hearing loss.

**Hearing Assistive Technology (HAT) lending:** a free short-term HAT lending program that gives you a chance to try out various technology (TV listening systems, shake-awake alarm clocks, amplified telephones, etc.)

**Speechreading Classes:** CHHA-NL offers in-person and online speechreading courses.



# Listen and Learn

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Listen and Learn is an online program for parents and caregivers of children with hearing loss. This FREE four-video lesson series empowers caregivers to create a language-rich environment at home, allowing their children to better learn to listen, speak, and thrive.

When children with hearing loss are diagnosed early and have sufficient support from their family, they can learn to listen and talk similar to their hearing peers. In this program, you will learn how to create a learning environment within your home that is rich in language development opportunities. This program is free and accessible online so you can complete it at your own pace and review it as often as necessary.

## How to access the Listen and Learn Program:

1. Type in the web address or scan the QR Code below in your camera app.
2. Click button that says "Click Here to Sign Up."
3. When a new webpage opens, follow the instructions on the screen to create an account.
4. Once logged in, Listen and Learn will appear in "Courses" tab.

[www.chha-nl-learn.ca/courses/listen-learn](http://www.chha-nl-learn.ca/courses/listen-learn)



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