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CLASSROOM TIPS

INCLUDING CHILDREN WITH HEARING LOSS IN MAINSTREAM EDUCATION

Teachers play an important role in a child's educational and social development. Most hearing-impaired children in mainstream schools have been fitted with hearing technology that can help them to hear better. It is important to remember that even though the child may wear hearing technology there are still limitations that come with it, which is why there are practical compensatory techniques/strategies in place to help the child with hearing loss perform at their best.



- **Make sure the hearing technology is worn daily and is working**

Hearing technology needs to be constantly maintained. As the teacher it is not your responsibility to look after the hearing aids, however you can still lend support and it is important to become familiar with the technology the child uses

Hearing Device Management

- Check if the device is on
- Listen if the device is making a noise
- Ensure the ear mould is fitted properly in the ear
- Check for moisture, wax, dirt, loose parts
- Replace the battery (**have spare batteries in class**)
- If broken, send device for repairs as soon as possible
- Encourage children and parents to take ownership of management

- **Make listening as easy as possible – use FM/RM or mini mic (assistive listening devices)**

- Make use of the FM system **throughout the day**. Make sure that the FM/RM or mini-mic goes with the child to all other classes and encourage the other children to use it during presentations or discussions
- Remember the FM system will help eliminate background noise and distance

- **Improve communication**

- Speak naturally in a clear voice at a regular rate. Don't exaggerate. Pause when you can and wait a bit longer for responses
- When giving instructions use short simple sentences and visual aids where possible
- Use paraphrasing and repetition where necessary
- Topic changes can be difficult. Take a moment to introduce a new topic before giving important information.
- Avoid: *Do you understand?* OR *Did you hear me?* Difficult question to answer as the child cannot know if they missed something. Rather use: *What did you hear?* OR ask the child to rephrase what they understand (include other children too)

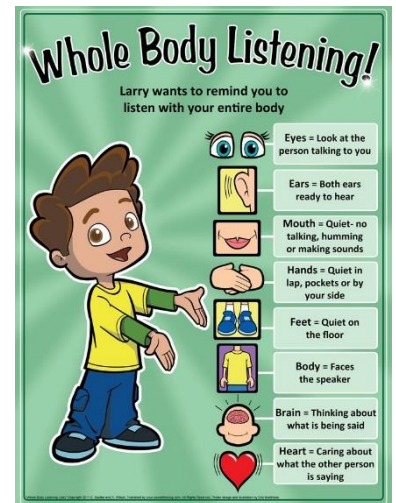
- **Positioning and classroom acoustics**

- Place the hearing-impaired child in the front row/ close to the front, and not close to the door
- Face the class while you are speaking and explaining (do not face the blackboard)

- Stand next to student's better hearing ear when engaging with him/her
- Close windows and doors in noisy environments

Ideas to improve classroom acoustics:

- Rubber under desks, chairs and tables to lessen scratching sound
- Carpets/ cork on floors to lower sound of people walking
- Bookshelves/ dividers
- Panels on walls, acoustic ceiling tiles, curtains to absorb the classroom noise
- Have "listening rules" for your whole class



- **Buddy system and social integration**

- Children with hearing loss may be targeted by bullies. Make sure all children in the class understand why the child is wearing hearing technology and what it is
- Encourage the child with hearing loss to talk about this/her technology and show his friends how it works
- Encourage a buddy system where children in the class help each other remember things
- Sometimes ask other children what they heard and understood rather than always focusing on the child with hearing loss

The Carel du Toit Centre would like to continue to support our children in mainstream education. If you have questions or concerns please don't hesitate to contact us.

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