

"Pay Attention!" Young Children with Hearing Loss



We all know how difficult it can be to keep the attention of a young child. If you are a teacher of preschool aged children, that is compounded by having a group of young people to keep focused. Add a child with hearing loss, and you realize that your usual techniques may not work.

Here are some ideas you may consider trying in your classroom to help keep everyone focused:

- ◆ Use visual signals for transition times, such as flashing the lights.
- ◆ Teach sign language for basic directions to all the children. Suggestions are stop, toilet, line up, sit, yes, no, please, and thank you.
- ◆ Use individual carpet squares for carpet time and plan their placement for each child.
- ◆ When reading a book to the group, show the picture and then turn the book towards you while reading the story. Then let them look at the picture and discuss before moving on to the next page. This allows the children to "hear" the story by watching the reader's face or watching sign language instead of only looking at the pictures. You can also encourage involvement with the story by pairing actions or teaching a few signs from the story for all of the children to participate.
- ◆ Make the day predictable. Have a visual schedule so children can anticipate what happens next.
- ◆ Use drama to help explain new concepts. Act out both right and wrong scenarios for expected behaviors.
- ◆ Point out and reward children who are paying attention.
- ◆ Have natural consequences for not paying attention such as being last for a special activity.
- ◆ Make it meaningful. Keep it moving. Minimize interruptions and distractions.
- ◆ Use technology if possible. Smart boards with interactive possibilities are very effective for children with hearing loss.
- ◆ Make sure that the students are at their best, with all hearing devices working.



Keeping students' attention may be one of the biggest barriers to learning. You may want to make this a goal and keep data to show improvement.

by Laura Scott, Families First: Early Intervention Program, Lead Parent Advisor



Understanding My Child's Ability

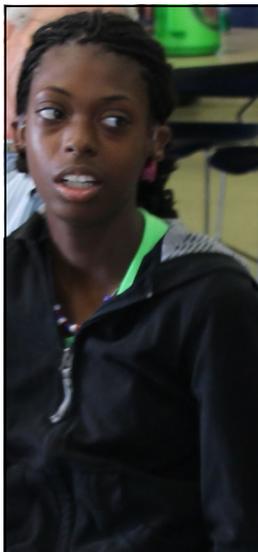
by Cindy McMurtrey, Mom

A new school year, a new batch of teachers. As the mother of a deaf 15 year old daughter, these words mean another group of teachers that really don't understand how my daughter learns. IEP's are written but reading it doesn't really explain what my child hears and doesn't hear. It doesn't cover how she learns.



She was born before newborn hearing testing. Thirteen years ago we finally figured out that she had severe to profound bilateral progressive hearing loss. We knew so very little about it that my dear husband thought progressive meant it was getting better. I had a family friend with a deaf grandson. He signed, had received a cochlear implant, and used cued speech. I knew there was technology available that might provide her some hearing. My only question to the doctor who told us this life changing news was "Will she be able to mainstream?". He answered, "Yes, with a lot of hard work". Looking back that was a huge understatement.

Each deaf and hard of hearing child is unique as is their journey through their educational years. Parent's expectations also evolve as they learn more about their child's ability and the resources available to help them. ADA, FAPE and IEP aren't words that most parents know when learning of their child's hearing loss. Hearing aids, Cochlear Implants, Sound fields, Personal FMs, interpreters, CART, language facilitators, TOD (Teachers of the Deaf), SLP (Speech Language Pathologists), frequencies, decibels, speech banana and audiograms don't mean much or anything in the beginning. A dozen years later, I have become an expert on my child's "disability".



Pete Wright, in his book, Wrightslaw: From Emotions to Advocacy - The Special Education Survival Guide, explains why parents must advocate and become an expert. I find myself explaining her "ability" to each teacher at some time through the year and in every IEP meeting, as the team is always changing. Many of the same points are explained over and over. Teaching her education team about her hearing loss and how deaf/hoh children learn differently (not better or worse, just different) than her hearing classmates is always my challenge; that deaf/hoh people can't tell you what they don't hear seems so simple but is very hard to really get for most. If they don't hear it, they don't know that they didn't. You can't ask do you understand? Restating, preteaching/teaching/reteaching, asking open ended questions, providing notes, note takings, captioning, and many other teaching skills can help. It is hard in today's classrooms for teachers to always have the time to do those things.

Understanding how a noisy environment impacts what is heard is also a topic that requires explanations and examples. I discuss her hearing tests and what the percentages mean. Not just her audiogram, which usually is interpreted as, "She hears at these decibels, so she must be hearing".

Parent Perspective-Continued from page 2

Word tests given in the sound booth in both quiet and noise are crucial. A recent test of single syllable words provided us with the following percentages. In Quiet ~ 70% of the words were heard and restated correctly (within 3 feet of listener and no background noise). In Noise ~ 40% of the words were heard and restated correctly.

This is where perspective and thinking are so important. On the surface, many professionals would say these are great scores. Yes, considering she is deaf they are great. From her perspective, she thought she had a "C" in quiet and an "F" in noise. From the perspective of learning in a typical 10th grade classroom they help explain the challenge she faces. Most words used in 10th grade aren't 1 syllable. Most 10th grade classrooms aren't quiet much of the time. She spends a great deal of thinking energy filling in the pieces. She fills in the pieces incorrectly and spends thinking time thinking inaccurately.



Here is an example of how she hears. " *I heard a kitten example to help teachers and I pay attention to how hard it is for my deaf daughter to "key up" and pay attention.*"



How did you do with just one sentence missing 40%? Here is what it really said. "I have used a written example to help teachers and IEP team members imagine how hard it is for my deaf daughter to "keep up" and pay attention." Another way to try and imagine how it is to learn with hearing loss is to watch the news with the volume turned way down or off. Even with closed captioning on it isn't easy. Lip reading is very challenging with no sound and knowing who is talking and seeing them also extremely difficult.

Helping her IEP team and more importantly her classroom teachers understand how she hears and doesn't hear is my job as her Mother and advocate. As she grows up she assumes more and more of that role but I joke that she doesn't live with a deaf person, we do. Her IEP team continues to work to meet her educational needs. Access to information is directly related to her success in the classroom. Teaching a deaf child is a challenge. Teachers need to learn how to teach deaf/hoh children. Each has his/her own challenges and abilities.

From the Editor

In this issue of *Deaf Education News*, I have introduced two new columns:

1. *ECSE-Tricks of the Trade*: Although the focus of this column will be for teachers of ECSE aged students that are deaf or hard of hearing, often the information will be useful for older students as well.
2. *Parent Perspective*: This column will allow parents to share, in a constructive way, their experiences and the lessons they have learned from parenting a child that is deaf or hard of hearing.

I plan to add a *Student Perspective* column in some future issues. This is **open to Junior or Senior High School age students** with hearing loss that want an article written or dictated by them included in a future issue. Schools should email me for more information if you have interested students, and I will send you additional information.

Email Larry Hoard at: rcd@msd.dese.mo.gov

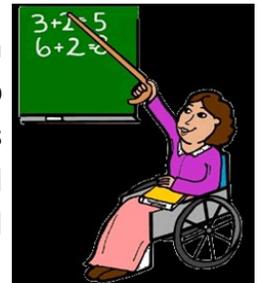
TIPS FOR TEACHERS

“VISUAL AIDS”

Whether they sign or talk, use hearing aids or cochlear implants, most students with hearing loss need visual aids to succeed academically. In your classrooms,



1. Use as many visual aids as possible. Write agendas, instructions, summaries, key words, concepts and homework assignments on the blackboard, overhead projector, or electronic whiteboards.
2. Provide a written outline or summary of materials to the student before class.
3. Establish a system so that students may obtain copies of notes from a qualified notetaker.
4. Provide students with copies of any PowerPoint presentations, class summaries, or other supporting classroom documents.
5. Use a laptop attached to a projector, an electronic whiteboard, or an overhead projector to display information, pages from books, and web pages. Using a projector allows the teacher to continue to face the class without continually turning to a blackboard; this provides a richer visual environment for all students. Additionally, these pages can be printed and become notes for the student.



Also, face the student when speaking or signing and give frequent eye contact.

WHAT IS “VISUAL NOISE?”

Visual Noise refers to anything that visually blocks, disrupts, impairs or distracts a deaf person’s attention from visual information or communication. Here are some common examples:



- ◆ A student trying to lip read a man with a mustache, another student with mouth and tongue piercing, a person that talks while not facing the student, or blinding light from a nearby window.
- ◆ A person standing in front of a student’s interpreter.
- ◆ An interpreter that is wearing a flashy or brightly colored shirt, has brightly painted finger nails, large rings or heavy makeup.
- ◆ A water bottle, cup or purse on a table that blocks the student’s view of another person signing.
- ◆ A flickering overhead incandescent light.





First Choice, Not Last Resort

Missouri School for the Deaf, 505 East 5th Street, Fulton, MO 65251
Phone: 573-592-4000 V/TDD; Fax: 573-592-2570; www.msd.k12.mo.us

MSD Outreach Services: Audiology

Dr. Alison Burco administers free hearing evaluations to Missouri children, from birth through age 21. She is available Monday-Friday for testing and consultations concerning hearing aids, FM systems, cochlear implants and other issues related to deafness. Dr. Burco can be contacted at the MSD Resource Center on Deafness.

Phone: # 573-592-2543, voice or TDD or Email: rcd@msd.dese.mo.gov



FAMILIES FIRST

EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM

Parent Advisors with this program provide home visits for deaf or hard of hearing children from birth through 8 years of age. Parent Advisors offer the family information, support, and encouragement, as well as provide ideas for strategies parents may use to help a child develop in the areas of language acquisition, communication, and social and emotional skills. All services are provided free. Families must live in Missouri to qualify.

For more information: Phone: (573) 592-2543; E-Mail: ff@msd.dese.mo.gov

MSD Resource Center on Deafness-Outreach Services

Free Services

- Information about hearing loss and appropriate educational services for deaf or hard-of-hearing students
- Audiological exams and APD testing for Missouri children birth through 21
- School visits and consultation by a deaf educator
- Inservice presentations for schools
- Language assessment for deaf and hard-of-hearing students unable to be appropriately tested in their home districts

Rental Program

- Annual leases of personal and group amplification systems to schools

Phone: 573-592-2543; Email: rcd@msd.dese.mo.gov



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