

Supporting a hearing impaired child with a severe hearing loss

For children with a severe hearing loss, normal levels of conversational speech will not be heard and loud sounds will be heard only as quiet sounds. It will be essential for them to use hearing aids to access speech and language. They may also use a radio aid.

This degree of hearing loss can have a significant impact on the child's speech, their language development, and on their access to the spoken language of the curriculum.

A child with this type of hearing loss may:

- have British Sign Language as their first language or use Sign Supported English
- find it difficult to listen and understand speech particularly in background noise, eg. following instructions, class discussions.
- not hear clearly in paired/group work
- have unclear speech
- have delayed language
- have a reduced vocabulary due to a lack of incidental learning
- have difficulty acquiring phonics
- leave out unstressed sounds in their writing.
- be easily distracted and lose concentration
- pick up cues from their peers
- use lipreading to support their understanding of speech
- use verb tenses incorrectly and endings may be omitted
- word order may be confused.
- miss off word endings, such as plurals and possessives

To support the child with a severe hearing loss:

- ensure consistent use of hearing aids and/or radio aid
- face the child as they need to see your lips and facial expressions
- ensure you have the child's attention before you begin to speak to the class
- cue the child in to changes of topic . eg, use visual support.
- speak clearly and naturally at a normal pace
- repeat others' contributions
- speak one at a time
- keep background noise to a minimum
- use visual references
- check the child understands instructions/tasks with open ended questions