



Fact Sheet Series

Accommodating Students with Hearing Loss

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JAN'S ACCOMMODATION FACT SHEET SERIES

ACCOMMODATING STUDENTS WITH HEARING LOSS

According to the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD), it is estimated that more than 28 million people in the United States have hearing loss. The U.S. Public Health Service reports that over one million children are estimated to have a hearing loss. The causes of deafness or hearing impairment can be attributed to genetic factors, noise or trauma, sensitivity to medications, and viral or bacterial infections.

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) indicates that hearing is critical to speech and language development, communication, and learning; therefore, hearing loss can affect students in the classroom. By accommodating students with hearing impairments, educators may be able to help facilitate positive educational, social, and vocational outcomes.

The following is a quick overview of some of the accommodations that might be useful for students with hearing impairments. For a more in depth discussion, access JAN's publications at <http://askjan.org/media/atoz.htm>. To discuss an accommodation situation with a consultant, contact JAN directly.

Learning in the Classroom:

- Occupy classrooms that are not located near frequently used and noisy common areas such as the cafeteria, gymnasium, or administrative offices
- Reduce background noise and improve acoustics by shutting classroom doors and windows and quieting air rush sounds from air and heating ducts
- Add carpet, window treatments, or acoustical wall/ceiling coverings to absorb sound
- Reduce noise from furniture scraping on hard surfaces by attaching tennis balls to the legs of students' desks and chairs
- Fully light the classroom for optimum viewing of the educator and other students
- Arrange seats for optimum viewing of the educator and other students (front row if preferred or consider an open classroom arrangement such as a "U" shape)
- Provide visual and audible alarm systems

The U.S. Access Board (<http://www.access-board.gov>) is presently developing Classroom Acoustics guidelines for students. The Board's Response to Petition for Rulemaking on Classroom Acoustics (36 CFR Chapter XI) identifies the following classroom design factors to be addressed in future guidelines:

Facility and room acoustical design for good listening and learning environments will consider:

- site, space, and classroom adjacencies that minimize classroom exposure to environmental, equipment, and occupancy noise;
- room size and proportion for appropriate sound reflection and absorption;

- slab, ceiling, roof, and wall construction (including doors and windows) that are appropriate barriers to noise;
- HVAC equipment selection, system design, and installation that minimizes structure, duct, and operating noise; and
- finishes selected and located for proper reverberation control, and attention to electronic and radio-frequency interference with assistive devices.

For more information regarding classroom acoustics, please visit Petition for Rulemaking on Classroom Acoustics at <http://www.access-board.gov/pubs.htm> or contact the Office of Technical and Information Services, Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board at 202-272-5434 X132 (V) or 202-272-5449 (TTY).

Communication in the Classroom: Communication methods will likely vary according to the age and skills of the student as well as the curriculum content.

- Arrange the classroom so students with hearing impairments can see facial expressions, read lips, and assess body language of the educator and other students and provide preferential seating
- Arrange smaller groups for certain activities in the classroom
- Require that students raise their hand to speak, speak one at a time, and stand
- Repeat questions and comments from other students and allow the use of index cards to communicate
- Provide written or captioned school announcements
- Provide sign language or oral interpreting services
- Provide communication access realtime translation (CART) captioning services or computer assisted note taking
- Get the student's attention and address him or her directly when speaking
- Consider using different words or phrases to express the same thought
- Provide the student with the lecture notes
- Write assignments on the board or flip chart, or provide written assignments
- Abbreviate complex written assignments
- Provide a scribe or student volunteer to take notes
- Include basic sign language training in the classroom curriculum

Technology in the Classroom:

- Provide an assistive listening system such as an FM system
- Support the use of augmentative communication devices when applicable
- Use computers to communicate via e-mail or instant messaging (IM)
- Provide visual and audible alarm systems
- Use scrolling messaging marquees for school announcements
- Use captioned videotapes/films
- Provide TTYs for telephone use

Resources Specifically for Students with Hearing Impairments

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)

2200 Research Blvd
Rockville, MD 20850
(800) 638-8255 V/TTY
actioncenter@asha.org
<http://www.asha.org>

American Society for Deaf Children (ASDC)

ASDC Headquarters
800 Florida NE, #2047
Washington, DC 20002-3695
asdc@deafchildren.org
Toll Free: (800) 942-2732
Fax: (410) 795-0965
<http://www.deafchildren.org/>

National Deaf Education Network and Clearinghouse

Gallaudet University
800 Florida Ave. NE
Washington, DC 20002-3695
(202) 651-5051
(202) 651-5052 TTY
<http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/infotogo>

National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD)

Information Clearinghouse
31 Center Drive MSC 2320
Bethesda, MD 20892-2320
Toll Free: (800) 241-1044
TTY: (800) 241-1055
nidcdinfo@nidcd.nih.gov
<http://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/hearing/>

Reading

Using a Sign Language Interpreter & Providing Visual Access to Deaf Students

<http://www.deafmall.net/>

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