

# Mild hearing loss



**Mild hearing loss can have a major impact on all aspects of a child's development, including language and literacy skills, working memory, attention and concentration, and social skills.**

A child with a mild hearing loss can miss  
**up to 50%**  
of what's being said  
in the classroom.

In England, children  
with a mild hearing loss  
underachieve by  
**a whole grade  
per GCSE.**

**47%**  
of parents of a child  
with a mild hearing loss  
feel that their child is  
behind for their age.

**8/10**  
children experience  
hearing loss due to  
glue ear before the  
age of 10.

**Mild hearing loss has a particularly big impact on language and learning in the early years.**

Adults with hearing loss can sometimes 'fill in the gaps' of what they've not heard by thinking about the situation, drawing on past experiences, and making an educated guess at what someone has said.

Children and young people with hearing loss find this harder because they haven't had the chance to build up a vocabulary or memory of what someone might say in a particular situation.

**With your  
support,  
children with  
mild hearing loss  
can achieve as  
much as other  
children.**

# Signs of mild hearing loss

Doesn't respond  
when called

Constantly asks  
for speech to be  
repeated

Watches faces/  
lips intently

Doesn't  
always follow  
instructions  
straight away

Often  
misunderstands  
or ignores  
instructions

Makes little or  
no contribution  
to group  
discussions

Watches what  
others are doing  
before doing it  
themselves

Complains  
about not being  
able to hear

Often needs  
help from their  
friends

Tires easily

Talks too loudly  
or too softly

Becomes easily  
frustrated

Appears  
inattentive  
or as though  
daydreaming

Plays alone and  
doesn't engage  
with group  
social activities



## Remember

Mild hearing loss can fluctuate, especially if the child has glue ear. Children may display some of the above signs on some days but not others.



**Many of these steps will benefit all the children you work with.**

## What can you do to help?

### **1 Make sure communication is clear and effective**

- Check that you have the child's attention before you start talking, eg by saying the child's name.
- Speak clearly and at your normal level and pace. Speaking too slowly or exaggerating mouth patterns will make you harder to understand as it distorts speech.
- Make sure the child can see your face clearly to help them to hear you and follow your lip patterns. Avoid standing in front of a window or bright light, or turning to face the board while speaking.
- Make your teaching as visual as possible by using photos, graphics and other visual aids.
- Encourage turn-taking and speaking one at a time during group work.

**2**

## **Reduce background noise as much as possible.**

- Turn off any equipment, like interactive whiteboards and computers, when not in use.
- Shut the door if there's outside background noise.
- Use soft furnishings and fabrics to help improve acoustics.

**3**

## **Make the most of hearing technology**

Technology like soundfield systems and radio aids can support hearing and listening in your classroom. Ask your local sensory service about technology that could be provided. Be aware that some children may be reluctant to use hearing technology – gently encourage and support them.

**4**

## **Factor in plenty of breaks**

Children with mild hearing loss have to concentrate harder than their peers, which can lead to tiredness (more information at [ndcs.org.uk/tired](https://ndcs.org.uk/tired)).

**5**

## **Check there's been a full assessment of the child's needs**

Get advice from a specialist Teacher of the Deaf on this.



# Next steps

- Always talk to the child's parents – they will have lots of ideas and suggestions.
- If the child is old enough, ask them how you can best support them.
- Speak to the person responsible for special or additional needs in your school.
- Contact the local specialist education support service for further advice and support from a Teacher of the Deaf.
- If you think a child might have unidentified hearing loss, discuss this with their parents and suggest they ask their GP for a referral to an audiologist.



## More information

- [ndcs.org.uk/education-professionals](https://ndcs.org.uk/education-professionals)



**Any questions? We're here to help.**

Helpline: 0808 800 8880  
[helpline@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:helpline@ndcs.org.uk)  
[ndcs.org.uk](https://ndcs.org.uk)





## About us

**We're here for every deaf child who needs us – no matter what their level or type of deafness or how they communicate. We want to work with professionals like you to make sure nothing holds deaf children back.**

Visit our website [ndcs.org.uk](https://ndcs.org.uk) for advice and support.



**We're the National Deaf Children's Society, the charity for deaf children with any level of hearing loss.**

### **Helpline**

0808 800 8880 (voice and text)

helpline@ndcs.org.uk

**ndcs.org.uk**



**We're always looking for ways to improve our information.**

Use your smartphone's camera to scan this QR code and share your feedback on this resource.

You can also give us your feedback by emailing your comments to **informationteam@ndcs.org.uk**.

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