

Deafness and Hearing Impairment

CHARACTERISTICS OF DEAFNESS AND HEARING IMPAIRMENT AND RELATED INFORMATION FOR PARENTS, TEACHERS, AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL PROFESSIONALS.

Note: Deaf individuals may ascribe, *or not ascribe*, to titles such as: *Deaf, deaf, deafblind, deafdisabled, hard of hearing, late-deafened, and hearing impaired.*



→ Description

The CDC reports that 1-5 per 1,000 children have hearing loss

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) defines "hearing impairment" and "deafness" separately. Hearing impairment is defined as an "impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating that adversely affects a child's educational performance." Deafness is defined as a "hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification."

→ Etiology

Hearing impairment can happen when any part of the ear is not working in the usual way and may be caused by...

- Genetic factors (congenital, as opposed to acquired)
- Infections during pregnancy (e.g. cytomegalovirus, rubella, herpes, or syphilis), teratogens, or other conditions occurring at the time of birth or shortly thereafter.
- Premature birth
- Childhood infections (e.g. measles, chickenpox).
- Head trauma after birth.
- Otitis Media (i.e. middle ear infection) due to nasal congestion.

→ Common Characteristics and Features

- Delayed sounds/speech
- Frequent or re-occurring ear infections.
- A family history of hearing impairment
- Difficulties attending and listening
- Other delayed language skills
- Performing poorly at school
- Lack of response to loud, sudden noises.
- Poor coordination

"It often comes as a surprise that many deaf individuals refer to themselves as being *members of the Deaf community* and ascribe to *Deaf culture*. These individuals view themselves as a unique cultural and linguistic minority who use sign language as their primary language."

→ Common Deficits*

Children with hearing impairments, or deafness *may* also experience:

- Language delay/disorder
- Speech delay/disorder
- Sensory processing
- Attention and listening difficulties
- Behavioral difficulties
- Gross motor difficulties due to middle ear dysfunction affecting balance.
- Difficulties with reading and spelling.

→ Outcomes and Interventions

Developmental outcomes vary, but hearing impairment is often life-long. Early intervention is important! The earlier a child who is deaf or hard-of-hearing starts getting services, the more likely the child's speech, language, and social skills will reach their full potential. Interventions may include:

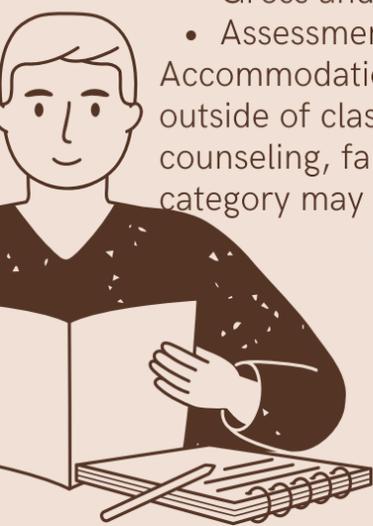
- Working with a professional (or team) who can help a child and family learn to communicate (using ASL, Black ASL, technological tools, etc.)
- Getting a hearing device, such as a hearing aid
- Joining support groups
- Taking advantage of other resources available to children with hearing loss and their families.

→ Accommodations and Assessments, etc.

Assessment areas may include:

- Hearing screenings, other medical assessment
- Psychoeducational testing (completed by a school psychologist)
- Speech and language assessment
- Daily living skill assessment
- Gross and Fine motor skill assessment
- Assessment of accessibility of classroom and academic materials

Accommodations may include assistive technology, accessible materials, other in-and-outside of classroom supports (like a notetaker), speech and language services, counseling, family supports. Identification for Special Education under the related IDEA category may also be considered.



[CDC - Hearing Loss in Children](#)

[National Deaf Center](#)

[Galludet University Center for Black Deaf Studies](#)

[Trinity University - Students with Vision and Hearing Loss](#)

[Center for Parent Information and Resources](#)

References and Resources