



# **Tips for supporting children with Hearing Impairment**

## **What can parents do when they find their children having hearing problem?**

Hearing impairment may have impact on children's language development and learning. If parents find their children having hearing problem, they should seek medical advice as soon as possible. Hearing test can be conducted to assess the degree of impairment. Appropriate rehabilitation services can then be arranged, such as hearing aids prescription, consultation with Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) specialists, speech and language therapy, participation in parent associations of children with hearing impairment, and any other trainings suitable for the children.

## **What should parents pay attention to when using hearing aids in their children?**

It takes time for children to get used to wear hearing aids. Parents should ensure that the hearing aids and ear moulds are placed in proper positions. Parents should also note if their children have any signs of allergy or discomfort after wearing the hearing aids. The battery and proper functioning of hearing aids should be checked every day. Ear moulds need to be replaced on a regular basis as the children grow up. They should contact audiologist if they have any enquiries.



## Can “deaf” children talk?

Hearing impairment of various degrees is commonly referred to as “deafness”. Children with hearing impairment can learn to talk if they have normal oral structure, proper hearing amplification and undergone appropriate speech and language therapy.

## What are the tips in communicating with hearing impaired children?

- Make sure that you have your children’s attention. You can call their name before you start the conversation.
- Face your children with adequate eye contact during conversation. Your children can understand better by looking at your facial expressions and lip movements under good lighting.
- Speak naturally. Don’t exaggerate your lip movements. Give them time to assimilate what is being said.
- Stand close to your children when speaking. Don’t raise your voice deliberately as this can distort sound and cause pain to users of hearing aids.
- Use simple words and sentences. Talk more about what is happening around. You can also use facial expression, body gesture and environmental hints to facilitate their understanding.
- If your children do not understand, you can repeat or rephrase/simplify your sentences.
- Encourage your children to express their needs by words.
- Focus on the content rather than the articulation errors during the early stages of language development.



## **What should parents do if their children do not speak even with hearing aids?**

Acquisition of speech takes time. Like children with normal hearing, children with hearing impairment follow similar developmental milestones in speech and language development. They all begin by imitating what they hear, then learning to speak single words, phrases and sentences, etc.

## **What to note when raising children with hearing impairment?**

Most children with hearing impairment have normal development in cognition, motor and many other aspects. Parents should not just focus on the impairment of children and underestimate their abilities. Overprotection may lead to a passive personality and overdependence on others. Parenting method should be consistent towards the children and other siblings.

## **What should parents do when children start schooling?**

Parents are encouraged to communicate with teachers proactively and regularly for children's individual needs. By doing that, parents can also have a better understanding of their coping in school. Children are preferred to be seated in the front and middle of the classroom so that they can hear their teachers better. Parents can introduce your children to their classmates, explain to them the needs of your children, share with them how hearing aids work and how they can help to improve hearing. By doing this, their peers will understand more about hearing aids and reduce the chance of making fun of them.



## What can parents do to avoid further damage to hearing of their children?

To avoid further damage to their hearing, parents should teach children on how to protect their ears:

- Never use hard tools to clean the ears.
- After washing hair or swimming, use a clean and soft towel to absorb water remaining in the ear canals.
- Avoid being exposed to loud sound for a long period of time. When necessary, cover ears with hands or wear ear plugs for hearing protection.
- Avoid high volume when listening with earphones. Excessive loud sound can lead to further hearing damage.
- Avoid head impact or being slapped since these may cause permanent damage to hearing.
- Seek medical advice immediately when any concern about hearing arises.



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