

who can see the picture but cannot hear the message. However, with **closed captioning** a special decoding device is attached to the television, and the audio portion of a program is translated into subtitles that appear on the screen.<sup>†</sup>

## **Socialization**

Socialization is extremely important to children's development. If children attend a special school for the hearing impaired, they are able to socialize with peers in that setting. Classmates become a potential source of close friendships, because they communicate more easily among themselves. Encourage parents to promote these relationships whenever possible.

Children with a hearing impairment may need special help with school or social activities. For children wearing hearing aids, keep background noise to a minimum. Because many of these children are able to attend regular classes, the teacher may need assistance in adapting methods of teaching for the child's benefit. The school nurse is often in an optimal position to emphasize methods of facilitated communication, such as lipreading (see [Nursing Care Guidelines](#) box). Because group projects and audiovisual teaching aids may hinder the hearing-impaired child's learning, carefully evaluate the use of these educational methods.

In a group setting, it is helpful for the other members to sit in a semicircle in front of the hearing-impaired child. Because one of the difficulties in following a group discussion is that the hearing-impaired child is unaware of who will speak next, someone should point out each speaker. Speakers can also be given numbers, or their names can be written down as each person talks. If one person writes down the main topic of the discussion, the child is able to follow lipreading more closely. Such practices can increase the child's ability to participate in sports, organizations such as Scouts, and group projects.

## **Support Child and Family**

Once the diagnosis of hearing impairment is made, parents need extensive support to adjust to the shock of learning about their child's disability and an opportunity to realize the extent of the hearing loss. If the hearing loss occurs during childhood, the child also requires sensitive, supportive care during the long and often