

# Managing Hearing Loss in Children



There are different options to help manage your child's hearing loss. You will work with your child's healthcare provider to find the best treatment for your child. A team of trained specialists will also help you and your child deal with challenges that may come up.



## Your child's healthcare team

Your child's care team will include some or all of these key members:

- **Audiologist.** A specialist who tests for and identifies hearing problems. They also help find solutions for hearing loss, such as hearing aids and other devices.
- **Otolaryngologist or otologist.** A healthcare provider who diagnoses and treats possible problems of the ear.
- **Speech/language pathologist.** A professional who identifies and treats speech or language disorders that may accompany hearing loss.
- **Educator for hearing impaired.** A teacher of children who have trouble hearing.
- **Psychologist or social worker.** A specialist who helps your child and family cope with emotional, educational, social, and financial issues that may arise due to the child's hearing impairment.
- **Genetic specialist.** A healthcare provider who works with families on genetic issues, including inherited hearing problems.

## Hearing devices

These hearing devices may help your child:

- **Hearing aids.** These are electronic devices that help make sound louder.
- **Cochlear implants.** These are surgically placed devices that help children with severe or profound hearing loss.

## Speech therapy

During speech therapy, the speech pathologist will likely:

- Diagnose communication problems your child may have
- Educate you, your child, and your family about the child's communication skills
- Teach you, your child, and your family ways to help improve your child's speech and language skills

## Communication options

Depending how much hearing loss your child has, they may communicate using:

- Oral communication (speech and lip reading)
- Manual communication (sign language)
- Total communication: combination of both oral and manual communication

## Assistive listening devices

There are many types of assistive listening devices (ALDs). For example, FM systems are one type of ALD. These require a person speaking, such as a teacher, to wear a microphone. The speaker's voice is then carried to the child's hearing aids, cochlear implant, or earphones. FM systems reduce background noise. They are often used in classrooms to help children with hearing loss hear their teachers. Other ALDs include:

- Infrared systems used with the television
- Smoke detectors, telephones, and doorbells that flash lights
- Alarm clocks that vibrate
- Telephones that make sounds louder

Talk with your child's healthcare provider for more information about ALDs.

## Coping with your child's hearing loss

There are some important steps you can take to help you cope with and manage your child's hearing loss:

- Join a support group. Support groups give you the chance to talk with other parents who have children with hearing loss.
- Talk with your child face-to-face.
- Give your child sound stimulation, such as music.
- Give your child language stimulation, such as reading while facing them.
- Be aware of the effect of sound in your home. For example, having drapes on windows and carpets on floors can cut down on echoing. Echoes make speech harder to understand.
- Most important, treat and discipline your child as you would a child with normal hearing.

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