

Classroom Considerations for Students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing (and everyone else, too!)



All students can benefit from increased visual access in their classrooms, and most students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (D/HH) require it to access their learning environment. The following strategies can benefit everyone in your class, especially students who are D/HH.

- Be sure you have all students' attention before talking.
- Provide a visual signal for class transitions. Try "1-2-3 Eyes on Me" or thumbs-up for the whole class.
- If you call attendance verbally, implement a system where students can independently check in to class instead.
- Write key vocabulary, directions, and assignments on the board.
- Use visual schedules and graphic organizers.
- Restate all questions that students ask before you answer them. This includes academic, functional, and even the silly ones!
- During group reading, build in generous wait times so students can read, and then look to see the teacher's face during discussion.
- Have all students come to the front of the room to answer questions.
- Repeat all intercom announcements.
- Speak slowly and clearly; avoid yelling or overenunciation when talking.
- All captions and subtitles should be on all the time throughout the school.
- All students (and adults!) attend better when the speaker uses a microphone or other classroom amplification.
- Avoid standing in front of lighting sources or windows when speaking.
- Turn and talk when writing on the board.


- When using a projector or document camera, double check that the lighting is adequate so that students can see the teacher's face clearly.
- Double-check for understanding with all students by asking open ended questions instead of yes-no questions. Ask students to repeat back or to rephrase information.



- Provide a copy of notes to students or implement a buddy system where students take turns taking notes for each other.
- American Sign Language (ASL) is a beautiful language! All students can benefit from learning some basics of ASL and fingerspelling. Fingerspelling or signing new vocabulary words can provide a multisensory means of expression and increase classroom engagement.
- Start an ASL club at your school. Partner with Deaf Community members or other native users of ASL.
- If space allows, arrange classroom desks or tables in a semi-circle so all students can see each other all the time.
- Collaborate with other teachers and/or service providers who work with your students to provide support for new vocabulary or concepts.
- Seek opportunities for all students to have direct, peer-to-peer collaboration and teamwork.

For more targeted or individualized educational support for students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing in Arkansas, get in touch!

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