

Teachers' Fact Sheet

Children who hear well, learn well

Hearing loss affects how children cope in class and how they enjoy school. Children with hearing loss often have to work extra hard to hear correctly, which can make them tired and distracted. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, these issues are amplified further by the fact English may not be their first language.

In the classroom

During pre-school and primary school years many children suffer middle ear infections (otitis media) and mild hearing loss. Some studies suggest that up to 91% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in rural communities have otitis media (OM), which can affect their learning and behaviour.

There are a number of ways to help children with hearing loss in the classroom.

The student should

- Sit where the teacher's face can be seen, and where the teacher's voice is loudest.
- Sit away from background noise.
- Sit with the good ear towards the class and teacher, if one ear is better than the other.
- Sit where other children can be seen and heard during group activities.
- Sit with a buddy. The buddy can pass on any missed information.
- Tell the teacher if they don't understand.

The teacher could

- Check with the student that hearing aids are being used and are working properly (if applicable).
- Face the students and stay still while talking.
- Make sure there is good light in the classroom, so the student can clearly see visual cues.
- Use pictures or diagrams to convey ideas.
- Ask the student to pay attention before beginning new work or asking a question.
- Regularly check the student understands classroom instructions. Ask the student to say when they don't understand.
- Try to make the classroom quiet when teaching a new topic or providing instructions.
- Consider using a classroom amplification system (turn page for further information).



Care for kids' ears
Strong hearing, strong start.

Soundfield amplification

A Soundfield Amplification System makes the teacher's voice louder and easier to hear for all students in the classroom.

Soundfield amplification means:

- children with mild hearing loss can hear and follow instructions more easily;
- a child's behaviour may improve because they can hear what they're supposed to be doing;
- children are less distracted by outside noises;
- children may be able to concentrate longer and get more involved in activities; and
- there is less strain on a teacher's voice.

More information and help

Australian Hearing can help parents and teachers by:

- explaining the impact of different types of hearing loss;
- suggesting how to best communicate with students;
- providing training and reports;
- recommending equipment that can help children hear in class; and
- advising on the cost and availability of a Soundfield Amplification System.

Visit www.hearing.com.au or call 131 797 to be connected to your nearest Australian Hearing Centre or contact the Australian Hearing Head Office on (02) 9412 6800.



Care for Kids' Ears resources are based on the Recommendations for Clinical Care Guidelines on the Management of Otitis Media in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Populations (updated 2010), prepared by the Darwin Otitis Guidelines Group in collaboration with the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (OATSIH) Otitis Media Technical Advisory Group, for OATSIH, Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, Canberra, ACT.

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Source: *Australian Hearing* Fact Sheets - Soundfield Amplification for the Classroom and Hearing in the Classroom.



Australian Government
Department of Health and Ageing



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For more details, please visit www.careforkidsears.health.gov.au

All information in this publication is correct as of January 2013