

Tips for Daycare Providers

Here are tips to help you with a child who is deaf or hard of hearing

Visual Cues

Visual Cues are an easy way to get a child's attention. Instead of calling the child's name, walk over to them and tap them on the shoulder. Some children will scare easily if you tap them on the shoulder from behind, as they can not see you coming. Try to align yourself in their line of sight. This will let the child know you are wanting their attention. Another idea is flicking the lights on and off. This could signal to the child that the activity you are doing is over.

Reduce Background Noise

When there is a lot of unnecessary noise in the background, it can make it harder for a child with a hearing difference to follow instructions, understand stories, or have conversations with new friends. A child with any type of hearing difference has to work much harder to process and understand spoken language, and it can be exhausting. By turning off any unnecessary sounds (music, TV shows, fans, air purifiers, etc.) you are providing a quieter environment.

When giving out instructions and there is a lot of noise, try taking the child to the side where it is quieter and giving them the instructions one on one. You can also give visuals with "first, we will do A, then next we will do B" etc.

Eye Contact

When talking to the child it's important for them to see your face. Not all individuals with a hearing difference read lips, but most do rely on facial cues. And when you turn away to talk, your sound projects away from the child, making it harder for them to hear you and see you. By making eye contact, you also know you have their attention for next steps.

Patience

More than likely, this is a new experience for all involved. There will be growing pains and new things to learn. Try to be patient with the child, the parents, and yourself. Consider sending home a one page sheet of what happened today (songs you sang, shows you watched, snacks you ate). This will give the family an opportunity to build the child's language to match what you are doing in your setting, and have in depth conversations for bonding.

If you have a question, don't be afraid to ask

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Hearing Device Supports

The Family's Choice

Hearing Aids, Cochlear Implants and Bone Anchor Hearing Aids (BAHAs) are used for sound amplification. If you have a child in your daycare that uses one of these, please have a conversation with the family on when/where you want them wearing them. Please don't make this decision on behalf of the child. It can be tricky (we know, we have been there), but if you are seeing a change in the child's behavior or resistance in wearing them, please talk with the family. It might be a signal to see the audiologist again, over sensory environments, or lack of vocabulary to express a need/want.

What to do when child isn't wearing them?

If you have a child who is napping at daycare, more than likely they will be taking their hearing aids out. Please discuss with the family a safe place, away from other children and pets, to keep them during this time.

If the child is refusing to wear them, please talk with the parents. This could indicate the child isn't feeling well, or they simply need a hearing break. It is common for children this age to take them out multiple times a day. With the families permission, and ruling out illness, continue to put them back in. We have a saying, "If the child takes them out/off 100x, put them back in/on 101."

Batteries

- How long do they last?
 - These devices require a lot of power to run properly. And without working batteries, they are useless. Some devices will need to be changed every day, while others can use the same batteries for a week or more. Come up with a plan with the parents for back-up batteries, and know how to put them in.
- Are batteries dangerous?
 - As a caregiver it is vital that you understand that hearing aid BATTERIES ARE POISONOUS if swallowed. The extra batteries should be kept locked away from young children just as you would lock away medicine. In an unfortunate circumstance that a child were to swallow one, call Poison Control (800-222-1222) and/or get to the hospital emergency room.
- How do you keep the batteries safe while the child is wearing them?
 - These devices have been designed for children. Each device has a lock on the battery door, just for this reason. Please be sure you know how to lock, and unlock, this battery door.

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