

Sound Matters

Educator Content

Even a mild hearing loss can seriously impact a child's ability to learn in a school environment. It can also be easily misdiagnosed in the busy classroom. Here are some comparisons to assist educators in identifying hearing loss:

Mild Hearing Loss vs. Attention Deficit Disorder

MILD HEARING LOSS	ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER
Behaves impulsively / instinctively	Behaves erratically
Suffers with assignments	Suffers both scholastically and socially
Doesn't complete assignments, or misses specific instructions	School work is carelessly done, if at all
Exhibits issues with attention and comprehension with verbal instruction or other audio content	Exhibits tendency toward frequent distractions
Responses often inappropriate for situation	Interrupts instructions or conversations
Issues with following oral directions	Issues with follow through
May act shy or undeserving	May isolate and /or behave reactionary
Appears to not listen or hear	Difficulties being still and attentive
Requests frequent repetition	Requires consistent reinforcement

Tips for Educators

Analyze the classroom environment from the student's perspective. Look for things that might interfere with being attentive. Attempt to reduce or eliminate any distractions

- Sunlight / reflections
- Outside commotion
- Classroom temperature
- Noisy hallways
- Items in the classroom that tend to be distracting

Speak clearly and loudly enough to insure all students can hear you. Use a microphone and classroom audio system if available. It will provide a more balanced audio experience for the students, and will reduce your fatigue level.

Observe students that don't appear to be listening, particularly if it's habitual. Don't speak often with your back to the students, while at the board, for instance, as it is difficult for any student to focus on a reflected voice.

When addressing the needs of a hearing impaired student, keep the following suggestions in mind:

- Do not write on the board facing away from the student
- Do not cover your mouth when speaking
- Assign a note taker to assist the student, if required
- Rephrase, rather than repeat, to aid comprehension
- Use verbal cues often, and explain things in detail
- Place hearing impaired students away from noisy distractions
- Make sure the student can see you, or any other presenter, at all times
- Present assignments, concepts, and instructions visually whenever possible