

BLUE PRINT

USING TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING KIDS IN SPORT

BLUE PRINT | Deaf Children Australia

Technology has made many sports and activities more accessible than ever for deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) children and young people. Many of these technologies are simple to use and can be put in place easily in most settings.

Here are some technologies you might find helpful for including a DHH child in your sessions. We've also covered some ideas for situations where technology may not be available.

Remote microphone (FM) systems

Many DHH children use assistive listening devices such as hearing aids and cochlear implants. These are great for amplifying sounds that are close by (within 1 to 2 metres), such as a conversation with a coach. However, they are less effective for hearing sounds from further away, such as instructions from the front of a room.

Remote microphone systems help DHH children hear better over longer distances and in noisy environments. These systems have two parts: a transmitter microphone and a receiver that picks up signals from that microphone.

The person who is speaking can wear the microphone. Or it can be placed somewhere that it will pick up their speech, such as on a table in front of them. The receiver can be fitted directly onto a child's hearing aid or worn around their neck.

Because sound is transmitted directly between the microphone and the receiver, the volume is more consistent and background noise has less impact.

"I have amazing technology and devices that help me in the studio. My hearing aid my FM are super helpful."

AMELIA, DANCER

Visual scoring aids

Instead of calling scores verbally, you can use visual aids for scoring. Examples include electronic scoreboards. For an inexpensive, low-tech option, a whiteboard or blackboard is fine, too. You might also be able to use hand signals.

"I use signs to give him his times."

NICK'S SWIMMING COACH

Lights

You can use lights as signals to start and end a race. In swimming, for example, lights on the side of the pool can be connected to the starter gun. Firing the gun triggers the lights to go on. Lights can be used to replace whistles and sirens in other activities, too, such as field sports and athletics. If lights are not available, hand signals or flags are another option.

Visual signs like flags and hand gestures are also good for gaining attention during play or competition. Simply tapping the DHH player on the shoulder is another great way to get their attention.

"When I'm swimming or at the beach I have to take my hearing aids out because they're not waterproof. So instead we use some hand signals that are easy to understand."

EWEN, SEA SCOUT

Deaf Children Australia.