



**LISTENING
FATIGUE
MATTERS:
HOW TO
MANAGE IT
AT HOME
AND SCHOOL**

**BLUE
PRINT**

Deaf
Children
Australia.

Listening fatigue is a common issue for deaf and hard of hearing children, especially at school. You can learn to recognise the signs of listening fatigue and put strategies in place to help prevent it.

If a deaf child is having trouble staying focused at school or seems isolated in social situations, it may be a sign of listening fatigue. Listening fatigue is common in deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) children. Learning to recognise and address it can help DHH kids do their best at school, home and socially.

What is listening fatigue?

Listening fatigue describes the physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion that stems from working hard trying to hear.

How does listening make DHH children tired?

Listening might seem effortless to people with normal hearing. But it takes energy to focus on and process sounds. Several areas of the brain are involved in doing this. When the hearing system is not fully functioning, the brain has to work harder to interpret sounds.

For DHH kids, the physical and mental effort of listening can drain their energy. Students with a hearing loss have to expend more effort than their hearing peers to process speech. They have to concentrate hard to lip read, interpret expressions and gestures, and fill in speech gaps. Over the course of a day, this can be very tiring.

Why does listening fatigue matter?

Research has shown that children with hearing loss tend to experience more fatigue than their peers with normal hearing. This matters because children experiencing fatigue can have:

- trouble with learning and performance at school
- feelings of tension, stress, and emotional upset
- lack of energy for other activities, such as sport or hobbies
- less energy for communicating and developing social relationships.

What are the signs of listening fatigue?

Signs that suggest a child may be experiencing listening fatigue include:

- reduced performance or participation in the classroom
 - reluctance to take part in situations that involve listening
 - difficulty concentrating
 - distractibility
 - irritability
 - tiredness
 - headaches
 - anxiety.
- It's important to note that other conditions can cause these symptoms. Talk to your child's GP if you have any concerns about their wellbeing. Your audiologist can help you to work out if your child is experiencing listening fatigue.

Ways to reduce listening fatigue in DHH kids

You can use specific tactics and create environmental conditions to reduce listening fatigue.

At school, ways to do this include:

- creating a good listening environment by improving acoustics in the classroom
- making sure students are wearing their hearing devices
- using other assistive technologies, such as an FM system
- reducing background noise during learning activities
- using captions on audiovisual content
- teaching listening-heavy classes when students are most alert

- allowing the student to remove their hearing device and leave the room for a rest break if needed.
- At home, families can help children manage listening fatigue by:
- explaining what it is and how to recognise it
- encouraging them to take short breaks from their hearing device when necessary
- discussing how to talk to their teachers and ask for some time out
- limiting background noise during conversations at home
- helping children develop coping strategies, such as deep breathing exercises, spending some time outside, or reading.



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DID YOU KNOW?

Studies show that children with hearing loss are 2 to 2.5 times more likely to experience moderate-to-severe listening fatigue than their peers without hearing loss.

Blueprint isn't just for sports clubs. If you offer activities or programs for children or young people, we'd love to have you on our side!

For further information about Deaf Children Australia.

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Deaf Children Australia uses the term 'deaf' to refer to all degrees and types of hearing loss.
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