



# > LISTENING FATIGUE MATTERS: HOW TO MANAGE IT AT HOME

FACTS ABOUT DEAFNESS

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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.



Listening fatigue is something that many deaf and hard of hearing children face, particularly at school.

It's not always obvious, but recognising the signs can help teachers create a more supportive and understanding classroom environment.

By learning about listening fatigue and how it affects DHH kids, teachers and school communities can better help these students thrive academically 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.

While these signs could point to listening fatigue, they can also be symptoms of other issues. It's important to keep an open dialogue with the student's family, and consult with the child's audiologist or doctor if you have concerns.

**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.**



## 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.

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.



For further information about  
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