



INCLUSIVITY

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> **creating a  
good  
listening  
environment**

**Creating a welcoming and supportive classroom for deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) students goes beyond providing hearing aids or cochlear implants. It's also about shaping the physical environment to ensure that every child can participate fully and understand what's going on.**

## WHY LISTENING CONDITIONS MATTER FOR DHH STUDENTS

A good listening environment allows DHH people to hear better and understand what's going on. Unlike children with normal hearing, DHH children find it hard to filter different sounds. This means background noise (like lots of people talking or music coming through speakers) gets mixed with important sounds such as a coach speaking. Hearing aids or implants make all sounds louder, including background noise. Creating an environment where DHH kids can hear you speak will aid their understanding of sounds and language.

## TIPS FOR CREATING A GOOD LISTENING ENVIRONMENT

### **Find a place with deaf-friendly acoustics**

Conditions in a room can make it easier or harder to hear. The physical space can either enhance or hinder a DHH student's ability to hear clearly. For example, hard surfaces can cause sounds to bounce around. This echo effect can make it harder to hear. Soft surfaces like carpet and furnishings like curtains absorb sound, helping reduce echo

## REDUCE BACKGROUND NOISE

**To ensure DHH students can focus on important sounds:**

**CHOOSE QUIET SPACES:** Hold conversations or lessons in areas with minimal distractions.

**TURN OFF DISTRACTING ELECTRONICS:** If there is background noise from televisions, radios, or other electronics, switch them off to make it easier for DHH students to hear speech.

**MANAGE CLASSROOM NOISE:** In a busy classroom, other students talking or movement can increase background noise. Encourage quieter classroom activities, and consider using visual cues or signals to remind students to keep noise levels down when necessary.

## USE ASSISTIVE LISTENING TECHNOLOGY

FM systems and other assistive devices can dramatically improve listening conditions by transmitting speech directly to the student's hearing device, helping them hear more clearly even in noisy environments or from a distance.

**FM SYSTEMS:** These systems use microphones to capture the speaker's voice and send it directly to the student's hearing aid or cochlear implant. This can be particularly useful in larger classrooms or during group activities where distance and noise can be problematic. Learn more about assistive technology [refer resources about assistive technology].

## USE VISUAL ALERTS FOR SAFETY FEATURES

In situations involving safety, such as fire, consider visual warning devices that use flashing or strobing lights to ensure important alerts are not missed.

## POSITIONING MATTERS

When speaking to a DHH student, make sure you are positioned in a way that makes it easier for them to hear and understand.

**FACE THE STUDENT:** Ensure you're visible to the student so they can lip-read if needed and get any visual cues that help with communication.

**KEEP DISTRACTIONS TO A MINIMUM:** Avoid speaking while moving around the classroom or facing away from the student. Staying in one spot and using clear, deliberate speech can make a big difference.



For further information about  
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# BUILD ING BRIDGES

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