**S.E.a.T.S.S.**

Specialist Education and Training Support Service (Sensory Team – Hearing Impairment)

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If you have any queries or want any advice please contact us by emailing **SEATSS@redbridge.gov.uk**

If you do not have access to email and need advice please phone us on **07780 164239**

**Severe Hearing Impairment**

**Facts:**

* Severe hearing impairment is usually sensorineural i.e. caused by damage in the inner ear.
* Without hearing aids the child will not be able to hear any speech sounds, but may hear some loud, environmental sounds such as a loud phone ringing.
* With hearing aids they will have access to most speech sounds, although higher frequency sounds may be missing or distorted.
* Most children with severe hearing impairment will develop oral (spoken) language, although they may need some sign support to help their language development.
* Consistent hearing aid use is crucial if the child is to develop good spoken language skills.
* At school the child will benefit from the use of a radio aid system to help counteract the adverse effects of background noise.

**Implications:**

* The child may be more tired during the day due to the constant level of concentration required.
* Speech intelligibility may be adversely affected.
* They may have delayed language skills such as a limited vocabulary, the omission of word endings.
* It will be extra challenging for the child to hear in noisy environments eg a playground, a restaurant, at home with background noise from a TV etc.

**General strategies:**

* Ensure all those interacting with the child are aware of the hearing loss and its implications.
* Ensure that the hearing aids are worn consistently, ideally throughout the child’s waking hours.
* Speak clearly but don’t shout or over-enunciate.
* Ensure you have the child’s attention before starting to speak.
* Help them to lip read by facing them when you speak and not covering your mouth. Don’t stand in front of a window as this will put your face into shadow.
* Support spoken language with visual clues whenever possible, especially in the early years.
* Keep background noise to a minimum so the child can hear the key message more clearly.

**Extra strategies for school staff:**

* The child should be seated close to the teacher and to one side, so that they can see both the teacher and their classmates.
* If a radio aid system has been provided, ensure it is used consistently and appropriately.
* Reiterate what other pupils say during class discussion as the child may not be able to hear pupils who are not sitting nearby.
* Check the pupil has understood instructions and key points.
* Additional language support may help a child with a limited vocabulary.
* Help the child learn topic and general vocabulary using written and visual cues.
* During group work allow the child’s group to work in a quieter space whenever possible.
* Be aware that they will find it difficult to access information presented through video or audio. Try to use subtitled versions, make notes, or repeat/summarise the information orally.