

# Impact of Hearing Loss on Children

Hearing loss may be described as any defect in the ability to perceive or understand sound. Hearing loss may be “unilateral” (affecting one ear), or “bilateral” (affecting both ears). Children with hearing loss are at significant educational risk. “Children with mild to moderate hearing losses, on average, achieve one to four grade levels lower than their peers with normal hearing, unless appropriate management occurs” (SAC, n.d.). Parents, teachers, audiologists and other professionals should work together with the child to teach them to understand their hearing loss and to advocate for their listening needs. Everyone is unique and may find different strategies helpful.

## Children with unilateral or bilateral hearing loss may have difficulty with the following:

- hearing or understanding speech in a noisy room or at a distance (“selective hearing”)
- paying attention and may be easily distracted
- following spoken instructions and conversation
- inappropriate behaviors because they are frustrated
- keeping up with classroom work
- speech and language development, including grammar and vocabulary
- missing small words (e.g., an, the)
- spelling, reading and phonemic awareness skills
- hearing individual sounds clearly enough to identify fine differences in words (e.g., talked vs. talk vs. top, word endings including “-s”, “-ing”, “-ed”)
- peer relations and social confidence
- tiring more easily than classmates
- passive learning - children with hearing loss miss important information when the conversation is not directed towards them
- sensitivity to loud sounds
- locating warning sounds and other environmental noises
- knowing the location from which speech and sounds are coming



If you suspect your child has difficulty hearing, refer to the ACSLPA Information Sheet, [Strategies to Help Children with Hearing Loss to Listen and Learn](#). ([insert link](#))

Hearing levels and speech-language development (in preschool age children) or academic progress (in school age children) should be monitored regularly. Regular contact between parents, caregivers and teachers helps to promote understanding of the child’s successes and difficulties, and to implement strategies for success.

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## Getting Help

If you suspect a problem, consult a Registered Audiologist (R.Aud). To find a practitioner:

- Contact HEALTH LINK - Health Advice 24/7 at 8-1-1 or visit: [www.MyHealth.Alberta.ca](http://www.MyHealth.Alberta.ca)
- Enquire at a Public Health Centre or your child’s school.
- Find a private practice audiologist:
  - Search ‘Audiologist’ in the Yellow Pages.



Alberta College of  
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**Hear. Speak. Connect.**

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