Deaf Friendly Early Years Settings

Key strategies and advice.

Hearing devices do not provide pupils with 'normal' hearing. Even pupils with mild hearing loss rely on their vision to help them follow what you are saying.



Make sure you have the child's attention.

Get down to the child's level whenever possible.

Stay close; hearing aids work best over a distance of 1 to 2 metres.

Stay in good lighting and avoid strong sunlight as this can cast dark shadows.

Use plenty of visual clues.





All background noise makes it more difficult for children to concentrate and hear what is said.

Encourage other children to be aware of noise levels.

Curtains or blinds, carpets and putting cloths over tables helps reduce reverberation and noise.



When working with a group make sure all the children can see each other, with one child speaking at a time.

Show the other children how to get the deaf child's attention.

The other children can help by letting the deaf child know when and where to look.



Activity tables have the potential for lots of interaction and language development.

It might be better for the deaf child to have their back to the window so they can see everyone clearly



Make sure the deaf child knows who is speaking.

Try to make sure each child takes turns in talking.

Listening is hard work for kids with hearing loss and they will get very tired.

Break-up what you have to say into smaller chunks



When sharing a book with a deaf child think about your position. The child needs to be able to easily shift their attention from you to the book.

Include books with positive deaf role models.



Check that children have understood what you said at regular intervals.

If children become upset, give them time to calm down before attempting to get eye contact.

Use a calm voice and posture. Deaf children respond more to tone and body language



It is important to provide opportunities for a deaf child to develop their social communication skills.

Some deaf children may be reluctant to join in with others and need a lot of encouragement.



Produced by the Hearing Impaired Team, London Borough of Barnet, Building 2, North London Business Park, Oakleigh Road South, London N11 1NP
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