

# Best Practices for Including Students Who Are Deaf/Hard of Hearing



## Inclusion of Students Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing in the General Education Classroom for Educators and Administrators

Students who are deaf or hard of hearing (D/HH) have specific and individualized needs in all areas of the school community. A specially-trained teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing (ToDHH), an integral member of the student's Individual Educational Plan (IEP) team, has expertise in hearing-related disabilities and evaluates students to determine how their hearing level impacts their ability to access the academic setting. The ToDHH makes recommendations for tools and accommodations that give students access to the curriculum and all parts of the school day, and provides instruction through Florida Expanded Skills and/or Speech/Auditory Training Standards. These standards support students who are D/HH in learning skills and academic content, along with promoting independence and self-advocacy and ultimately academic and postsecondary success.

Student needs vary in many areas including: the student's hearing level, the type of amplification devices that the a student may wear, their preferred method of communication, and their individual foundation of language and how they access it.



## Teaching Tips for Students Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

- Collaborate with the ToDHH to model accessibility in all educational activities.
- Maintain a positive and flexible attitude.
- Provide preferential and flexible seating that includes visual and auditory access to all information sources.
- Pre-teach key vocabulary.
- Provide notes and presentation materials to students and service providers prior to class.
- Be explicit and frequently connect new content to pre-existing knowledge.
- Frequently check for understanding and comprehension.
- Establish high expectations for academic achievement.
- Assign grades based on mastery of grade-level standards.
- Provide meaningful, specific, and timely feedback.
- Increase wait time to allow for processing of auditory information and before calling on a student to respond, prior to moving on to the next concept.
- Implement and expect the student to use assigned hearing assistive technology (HAT) equipment.
- Use appropriate grade-level vocabulary and avoid ambiguous words such as "this" or "that."
- When asking questions, identify the speaker and repeat student responses.
- Facilitate student independence while encouraging self-advocacy and self-determination.
- Be well-versed and effective in providing the student's accommodations or modifications in accordance with their IEP.

### Teacher Tip

Arranging student desks in a U shape may provide the widest access to both peers and instructors.



Students who are D/HH have unique needs and may require specialized accommodations, some of which are not familiar to many educators. Depending on a student's comfort level, environment, and communication partner, their primary mode of communication may adapt to meet their individual needs for access. Use the student's Communication Plan and IEP as guiding documents to learn about their needs and how to design an accessible environment in which they will thrive. If you have questions, don't be afraid to ask the student's ToDHH.

# Expanded Skills for Students Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

The purpose of the Expanded Skills Standards for students who are D/HH is to enable them to apply concepts, knowledge, and skills related to their individual hearing levels in educational, home, community, or employment settings. These standards are designed for students who require intensive and specific intervention to address unique and specialized needs resulting from their individual hearing levels. Instruction in these identified needs promotes student success in standards-based instruction. ToDHHs are key IEP team members and play a critical role in developing these skill sets among students in this population. This instruction is provided in a variety of settings and may be delivered in student-specific communication modalities (for example, spoken language, sign-supported English, American Sign Language, and Cued Speech).



## Understanding Hearing Loss

Personal knowledge and understanding of hearing loss; awareness of needs related to hearing loss



## Resources and Technology

Mastery of skills required to maximize the use of resources and technology to gain access to all areas of their life



## Amplification

Understanding of personal hearing aid, cochlear implant, or bone-anchored hearing aid (BAHA) device management; understanding of the need for and use of hearing assistive technology



## Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy

Recognition of individual needs and how to effectively navigate settings by requesting support and accommodations as needed to access their environment



## Communication Strategies

Support in the areas of communication as needed per student's Communication Plan/IEP which may include auditory skills development, ASL development, spoken language development, receptive communication, and expressive communication for effective communication across all academic environments



## Postsecondary Preparation

Opportunities to explore career education, including academic instruction, daily living skills, vocational experiences, and community experiences



## Social-Emotional Skills

Support for communication as needed per student's Communication Plan/IEP which may include auditory skills development, ASL development, spoken language development, receptive communication, and expressive communication for effective communication across all academic environments



## Specialized Instructional Strategies for Educational Success

Instruction in utilizing strategies and supports specifically designed to alleviate barriers to instruction due to hearing levels or language deprivation, and training in the implementation of supplementary aids and services

