



For Related Service Providers

SUPPORTING STUDENTS WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING

Recommended Practices in a General Education Setting

TIP 1

Become involved in a student's educational planning.

Become involved in supporting the planning needs of students who are deaf or hard of hearing in the following ways:

- **Add your knowledge and expertise to the educational planning process** and participate in educational planning meetings.
- **Become familiar with a student's full educational plan** and how those aspects unique to your expertise complement the efforts of other professionals.
- **Promote collaboration and communication** among related service providers, administrators, educators, and family members.
- **Be an active advocate** for the student while also teaching that student how to self-advocate.

TIP 2

Promote understanding of the unique needs of learners who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Educate the school community about the following related to deaf and hard of hearing learners:

- **It's not only about hearing levels.** There are many overlapping factors that contribute to students' learning and communication needs.
- **Hearing technology DOES NOT restore hearing.** Wearing a hearing aid or cochlear implant does not ensure a student can hear and understand.
- **Visual scanning is important.** A student may appear distracted but may be appropriately focusing on visual information in the environment.
- **Missing bits and pieces add up.** A student may not overhear information communicated "incidentally" throughout the school environment. This may negatively impact student involvement, learning, and socioemotional functioning.

TIP 3

Share information about what is involved with successful inclusion.

Share the following considerations shown in evidence as important to successful inclusion:

- **Making students a valued part of the group** by having supports in place to enable them to feel like members of the school community, not visitors.
- **Having teachers and staff with high expectations** who connect with and feel responsibility for the students' success.
- **Providing focused teaching of self-advocacy** for students to:
 - learn to take an active role in their education,
 - develop a sense that they can succeed, and
 - acquire the skills to develop and nurture peer relationships.

TIP 4

Share instructional strategies to enhance access to learning.

Educate the school community about beneficial strategies to enhance students' access to the school environment, such as:

- **Providing flexible seating options** for students to best see and hear classroom lessons and discussions as well as for school-wide events.
- **Incorporating opportunities to support student access to incidental information**, such as establishing a buddy system or posting daily news items.
- **Providing supports to enhance visual accessibility**, such as use of real-time captioning and other captioned media.
- **Providing supports to enhance auditory accessibility**, such as use of assistive listening devices to support listening at a distance and in noise.
- **Reducing stressors to communication**, such as providing adequate lighting and making sure only one person is speaking at a time.

TIP 5

Raise awareness to possible "red flags" that suggest a student may be struggling and in need of support.

Raise awareness within the school to "red flags" such as the following which suggest the need for student support:

- **Avoids conversations** possibly related to lack of confidence in understanding others or being understood.
- **Hides hearing aids, cochlear implants, or other assistive listening devices** possibly due to embarrassment, teasing by peers, or wanting to fit in.
- **Demonstrates excessive fatigue and/or disorganized thinking** possibly resulting from the continuous effort required to listen and "fill in the blanks."
- **Tends to sit alone or does not want to join in activities** possibly due to feeling left out or bullied.