



Hearing Loss Causes Communication Breakdown

At any age hearing loss negatively effects communication. During early childhood hearing loss, if not picked up, can delay children's speech and language development significantly. Often poor speech clarity or language development is the first thing parents will notice. However if parents and others around young children can watch for the following milestones they may pick up a hearing problem early and be able to act quickly.

Expected Milestones for babies

3 months

- recognise their carer's voice and makes cooing noises.
- startle at sudden, loud noises

6 months

- recognise speech sounds and familiar noises.
- turn their head towards interesting noises,
- play with their own voice and laugh.
- use their voice to indicate pleasure and discomfort.

9 months

- may understand simple words like "mummy" and "daddy", "no", "bye-bye" and their own name.

12 months

- toddlers can speak one or more real, recognisable words.

18 months

- retrieve familiar objects on command
- speak between 20 to 50 words
- uses short and understand simple phrases
- learn new words each week.

24 months

- spoken vocabulary should be 200 to 300 words
- simple sentences can be spoken.
- adults who are not around the child on a daily basis can understand your child's speech.
- able to sit and listen while being read books.



If you notice any of these milestones are not being met see your doctor and get your child's ears tested.

In older children it is more difficult to identify hearing loss because their speech skills are already developed.

Nevertheless, these guidelines may help detect a possible hearing loss. The child:

- has a history of ear infections or glue ear
- seems to hear sometimes and not at other times
- wants the TV, Radio, or music volume louder than others around them
- says "What?" constantly
- moves one ear forward to listen, or complains they can only hear out of one ear
- falls behind at school or their teacher notes they don't seem to hear or respond as well as their classmates.
- states they 'can't hear you'. There is a danger in assuming the children are not paying attention.
- appears not to be paying attention
- has unclear speech which lacks the higher frequency sounds such as 's', 'z'
- starts to speak more loudly than previously
- looks at you intensely when you speak to them

You just have a feeling, but you can't put your finger on what your concern is. Don't let that stop you. Ask your doctor for a referral to ease your mind.

Hearing loss can occur throughout adulthood with one in two adults over 65 years experiencing hearing loss, particularly with higher pitched sounds. Hearing loss causes frustration and communication problems regardless of age.

If you think someone is deaf around you ensure they get their hearing checked regularly, there is likely to be a solution to either solve or reduce the impact of their hearing loss.



Some guidelines on speaking to someone who's deaf

- Get their attention first
- Face the person you are speaking to
- Speak at a normal rate, pausing at the end of each sentence.
- Speak clearly, do NOT shout
- Reduce distractions and background noise
- Wait for a reply – it may take time

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