

# Signs of Difficulty in Hearing

To learn to listen and talk your child needs consistent access to speech sounds. There may be times when your child has difficulty hearing and it is important to determine the reason so you can take steps to help. There are different reasons a child may have difficulty, and your child may not realize that they are having trouble hearing. You can help your child by recognizing signs of difficulty and taking steps to help. Some actions you can take at home, while other actions need the help of your audiologist.

You know your child best, and you might observe that your child is not paying attention, responding when called, knowing what they should be doing, or frequently saying “what.”

Your child may show signs of frustration or disrupt the class when hearing is difficult. A change in school performance or struggling to learn at school may also be a sign of a problem with hearing.

Your child’s speech may change, for example, speech may become less clear if your child is not able to hear all of the speech sounds, or your child may begin to speak louder.

It will be necessary to take steps to find the problem, and you will need to do this by ruling out reasons one at a time. The first step is to track when your child is struggling, how often it happens and the situation or environment.

Second, check the device to see if it is functioning properly. This will include checking the battery and listening to the device. By checking your child’s device every morning, and whenever you have a concern, you can act on problems with device function quickly.

If the technology is not working, see if you can fix the problem, for example, by changing the battery. If you can’t fix the problem or the hearing devices are working okay, contact your audiologist.

Your audiologist can do additional tests to check if the hearing devices are working or if they need repair.

If your child’s hearing devices are working appropriately, ask your audiologist to check your child’s hearing levels. If hearing has changed, then the audiologist can check to see if it is a permanent or temporary change.

If it is a temporary change, it may be caused by an ear infection or wax blocking sound from entering the ear, and a visit to your child’s physician may be needed.

For permanent changes in hearing level, the audiologist may need to adjust the hearing device settings. The audiologist may also make a referral to the physician for additional tests to understand the reason for the change.

If your child’s hearing devices are working appropriately, and there has been no change in hearing explore other factors that may need attention. For example, if your child has trouble hearing in noise, you can have your child move closer to the person talking, remove the noise source if possible, or move the child away from the noise. A personal assistive device such as an FM system may also help your child hear better in noise.