

TEN ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE EDUCATION OF STUDENTS WHO ARE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE), 2018

Hearing loss is often invisible. It presents unique obstacles and requires access to professionals with specialized training and expertise in working with students with hearing loss to comply with Title II of the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act), Section 504, and IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act).¹



Illustration by Rebecca Witzofsky

1 EACH STUDENT IS UNIQUE

A student's hearing levels do not necessarily predict their speech ability or use of sign language, nor can educators assume that students can hear because they can talk and/or use hearing technology.

2 HIGH EXPECTATIONS DRIVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING AND FUTURE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Deaf and hard of hearing children require learning and academic opportunities designed to enhance their abilities, not their disabilities. A database on student progress should be maintained and monitored.

3 FAMILIES ARE CRITICAL PARTNERS

High levels of family involvement contribute significantly to positive results. Parents have the right to be informed and engaged participants in their child's educational planning.

4 EARLY LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT IS CRITICAL TO COGNITION, LITERACY, AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

The first five years of a child's life are critical for language development. Language competence, whether spoken and/or signed, is the foundation for social-communication and cognitive skills. Students who are English language learners may require additional program supports and services.

5 SPECIALLY DESIGNED INSTRUCTION IS INDIVIDUALIZED

Individually designed instruction, assistive technology, and accommodations help students use their strengths to become full participants in their educational experiences. Parents and students should have a voice, and a choice.

Hearing loss is a "low incidence" disability, so there aren't many of these students in each school. Most regular and special education teachers have never had training in hearing loss.²

6 LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (LRE) IS STUDENT-BASED

A student's LRE provides full, direct, and clear access to meaningful language, communication, instruction, and social opportunities designed to meet their individual educational needs. Full inclusion may not be the LRE for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

7 EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS MUST BE CAREFULLY MONITORED

If students are not making appropriate progress in areas such as language, literacy, academics, or social-emotional health, the services and/or their placement must be examined and modified. Services must be based on individual needs rather than available resources.

8 ACCESS TO PEERS AND ADULTS WHO ARE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING IS CRITICAL

Adult and peer role models are beneficial to self-awareness, social communication, and overall social-emotional well-being. The IDEA "special factors" requirement includes "opportunities for direct communication with peers and professional personnel in the child's language and communication mode."

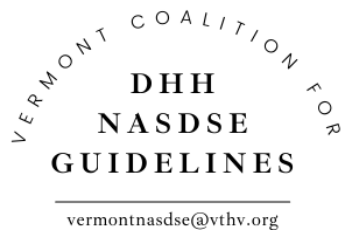
9 QUALIFIED PROVIDERS ARE CRITICAL TO A CHILD'S SUCCESS

Personnel must meet professional standards. Without qualified staff and appropriate support services, the ability of children to achieve optimal outcomes is jeopardized. State agencies and local education agencies should provide professional development and training specific to the needs of infants, toddlers, and students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

10 STATE LEADERSHIP AND COLLABORATION IS ESSENTIAL

Strong state and local leadership with effective collaboration among key stakeholders, including parents, deaf or hard of hearing consumers, state and local educators, university teacher preparation programs, and advocacy organizations, is the key to successful systems of delivery of programs and services.

Even when hearing technology is used and accommodations are in place, the effects of hearing loss on effort, fatigue, and listening comprehension are significant, and may not be fully understood by educators.³



For the full NASDSE Guidelines:

Optimizing Outcomes for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing: Educational Service Guidelines
<http://www.nasdse.org/docs/nasdse-3rd-ed-7-11-2019-final.pdf>

¹ Anderson, K. L., & Price, L. H. (2015). *Steps to Assessment: A Guide to Identifying Educational Needs for Students with Hearing Loss*. Supporting Success for Children with Hearing Loss Publications.

² Meyer, K. (2020, October 20). *Children with hearing loss need an educational audiologist on their team*. [Blog post]. Retrieved from <https://www.wrightslaw.com/info/rel.svcs.ed.aud.meyer.htm>

³ Anderson, K. (2014). *The Cascading Impact of Hearing Loss on Access to School Communication*. Supporting Success for Children with Hearing Loss Publications.