



Checklist for Parents of Children with Hearing Loss

By Anna Bella and Suzanne D'Amico

As the summer draws to an end, parents and students are gearing up for the approaching school year. Along with notebooks and pencils, here are a few suggestions to add to your back-to-school checklist to help your child make a smooth transition into the fall.

Tune up

Make an appointment with your child's audiologist prior to the start of the school year to ensure that the hearing aid or cochlear implant is in working order.

Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

Know your child's IEP inside and out. You will be better equipped to advocate for your child if you know exactly what he or she is entitled to.

Help your child self-advocate by familiarizing her with their IEP. Encourage her to speak up if she feels something isn't correct.

Meet with your child's teachers and principal to go over the IEP and explain your expectations for the upcoming school year. This will ensure that everyone is on the same page.

Technology

Make sure your child's teacher is aware of and able to operate any assistive technology that will be used in the classroom.

Teach your child the basic functions of their hearing aid, cochlear implant and/or FM device, including, changing a battery, switching programs, and adjusting the volume.

Keep an extra pack of batteries with your child, the teacher, and/or nurse to ensure that she never gets caught without them.

Transportation

Inform the bus company and bus driver of your child's hearing loss. Request that your child be seated upfront or with someone they know who can act as a buddy in case of an emergency.

Special Classes

Most IEPs address your child's needs only in the classroom but children spend their day in other areas of the school as well.

Gymnasium

The gym is noisy and echoes. It can be difficult for your child to understand instructions. Work with your child's gym teacher to implement best practices to ensure effective communication.

If your child's school has a pool, you can request one-to-one supervision during swim class. You can have this added to your child's IEP to ensure his safety.

Sweat and humidity wreak havoc on hearing aids or cochlear implants. Try keeping a small container of uncooked rice in his gym locker in which to store his hearing instrument during swim class. This can help eliminate unnecessary repairs.

Cafeteria

Children with hearing loss generally dislike the cafeteria because of the noise. See if other arrangements can be made such as a small lunch group in the guidance office or classroom to make lunchtime fun.

Auditorium

It's no fun watching a movie on a rainy day during recess if you can't understand what is being said. Most auditoriums have assistive listening devices. Inquire with your school what is available for your child and arrange for the appropriate instruction on how to obtain and use this equipment. Better yet, request captioned movies.

Emergency Preparedness

Emergencies can be scary for any child especially a child with a hearing loss. Discuss the school's emergency plan with your child and his teacher prior to the first drill. It's also appropriate to ask for an adult to be assigned to your child during an emergency to ensure he hears all instructions and safely exit the building if necessary.

After-School Activities

Inform your child's coach or after-school activity supervisor of your child's hearing loss. Make suggestions to help them better communicate with your child during group discussions or sporting events. **HLM**

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