

# Unilateral hearing loss



## General information for parents and carers

### The impact of hearing impairment

Children develop their communication, learning and social skills through normal everyday activities. Hearing impairment can impact on a child's development in a variety of ways, particularly on speech and language development. A child may not hear all words clearly. This may then be reflected in the child's speech, written work and confidence.

Children with a unilateral hearing loss may not pick up incidental speech or conversations, especially in background noise, and so do not experience reinforcement of language and vocabulary.

With very early diagnosis of hearing impairment and your support, the risks of speech and language delay can be greatly minimised

All children with a unilateral hearing impairment should be able to achieve their full potential socially, emotionally and academically given appropriate strategies.

### How to help your child

Here are some useful tips on how to communicate effectively with your child in order to support their speech and language development.

- Attract your child's attention before speaking so that he/she is ready to focus on what you are saying.
- Position yourself near to your child when speaking, ideally no further than 2 metres apart.

- Sit/stand so that you are closest to your child's better ear.
- Make sure your child can see your face clearly at all times so he/she can watch your lips. Position yourself at your child's eye level if possible.
- Ensure your face is well lit and that you stand with your face towards the light. (Never stand with your back to a window as the 'glare' can make seeing your face impossible!)
- Speak clearly and naturally. Avoid shouting or speaking too slowly as this distorts lip patterns.
- Use facial expression, body language and any other visual clues to reinforce meaning.
- Give your child time to process what has been said and to respond.
- For hearing impaired children, background noise makes listening much more difficult so turn off other unnecessary sound sources if possible, e.g. TV, radio etc
- Children with a unilateral hearing loss may find locating the source or direction of sound difficult. Teach your child to take extra care when crossing the road.
- Following group discussions can be difficult, so point out who is talking and repeat others' spoken contributions.
- If your child wears a hearing aid, check daily that the aid is clean and well maintained in order to ensure optimum performance.
- Reinforce new vocabulary and concepts as often as possible.
- Let your child know when there is a new topic of conversation.
- Remember, lip-reading and processing information require extra concentration and children often tire more easily.
- If you are not sure whether your child has understood what you've said, ask him/her to repeat the instructions or information given.
- Rephrase or use different vocabulary with the same meaning if necessary.
- Try to set aside some quiet time together each day, without other distractions, so that you can relax and enjoy communicating with your child.
- Support, respond to and praise all your child's attempts to communicate. Encourage family and friends to do the same and together aim to build your child's confidence.



## **Contact Details**

Telephone advice can be provided by the Co-ordinator for Hearing Impairment.

Jo-Ann Clarke on 07825 380152 (East and South Kent)

Sue Holder on 07825 013351 (West and North Kent)

General information and advice is available from the National Deaf Children's Society helpline:

0808 800 8880 or the website [www.ndcs.org.uk](http://www.ndcs.org.uk)

### **East Kent Children's Hearing Services**

Telephone: 01227 866487

Text: 07917 328056

Email: [ekh-tr.eastkentchildrenshearingservice@nhs.net](mailto:ekh-tr.eastkentchildrenshearingservice@nhs.net)

### **West Kent Children's Hearing Service**

Telephone: 0300 1232670

Email: [kentchft.childhearing@nhs.net](mailto:kentchft.childhearing@nhs.net)