

Implications of Hearing Loss

All types of hearing loss (conductive, sensorineural and mixed) can vary from a mild loss to a profound loss. Most children have some degree of measurable hearing or residual hearing. Only a small percentage of children will be completely deaf. The degree of hearing loss refers to how much hearing loss is present. There are five broad categories used to describe the degree of loss and they are listed below along with the softest levels of sound they can hear and the characteristics of each degree of loss.

Mild Hearing Loss 26 - 40 dB

- *Child will miss fragments of what is being said. At 40 db, can miss 50-75% of speech signal.*
- *Sounds may seem muted or muffled.*
- *Amplification is usually recommended; typically hearing aids and/or FM systems.*
- *Speech and Teacher of the Deaf services are usually recommended.*
- *Distance from the speaker affects the level of understanding.*
- *Background noise will interfere with speech reception.*
- *Hearing loss may manifest itself as inattentiveness, language delays and/or speech problems.*

Moderate Hearing Loss 41-55 db

- *Listening is a strain.*
- *Child will have difficulty understanding what is being said at a distance (beyond 3-5 feet).*
- *Child may miss as much as 50 - 75% of speech in conversation.*
- *Language is impacted including syntax (word order) and vocabulary development.*
- *Child will likely have difficulty with several speech sounds and experience articulation difficulties.*

- *Use of hearing aids is usually necessary.*
- *Child should receive speech, language services, teacher of the deaf services, educational audiological services and may need instructional modifications and classroom accommodations.*

Moderate to Severe Loss 56-70 db

- *Child may miss as much as 100% of speech in conversation even while looking at the speaker.*
- *Amplification and intervention is necessary for language and speech development.*
- *Needs speech and language services, Teacher of the Deaf services, audiological services, classroom accommodations and instructional modifications.*

Severe Hearing Loss 71-90 db

- *Without amplification, child will not hear speech but may only hear loud environmental noises. Amplification and intervention are necessary for language and speech development.*
- *Speech and oral language will not develop spontaneously if the hearing loss is prelingual (before language). Child will need intervention (either signing or amplification and therapy).*
- *Child may be unable to distinguish high frequency sounds.*
- *Socialization with peers will be affected due to lack of ability effectively communicate.*
- *Some families will choose ASL or Total Communication options for child to develop language. Visual access to language will help in child's language development if so chosen.*
- *Some families will choose cochlear implants and therapy to learn to understand speech and speak (listening and spoken language outcome).*

Profound Hearing Loss >90 db

- *This degree of hearing loss is often accompanied by the label deaf.*
- *Child will not be able to detect speech sounds without amplification.*

- *Child may hear some very loud sounds but is mostly aware of vibrations.*
- *Speech and oral language will not develop spontaneously if the loss is prelingual (before language) without intervention and modifications.*
- *Some families will choose ASL or Total Communication and use a visual modality for communication.*
- *Some families will choose a cochlear implant and therapy to develop a listening and spoken language outcome.*
- *Intervention should include speech and language services, Teacher of the Deaf services, audiological services, classroom accommodations and instructional modifications.*