

Signs your child might have hearing loss

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(HealthDay)—"Put your listening ears on!" frustrated parents often say. But some kids aren't deliberately tuning out Mom and Dad—they really can't hear them.

If you suspect your child has a hearing problem, get it checked out, experts advise.

Even minor hearing loss can affect a child's ability to learn and also lead to other problems.

"A child with just minor hearing loss can be missing 50 percent of the classroom discussion," said Jackie Clark, president of the American Academy of Audiology.

"There are [children](#) who have been diagnosed with a learning disability when really what they need are hearing aids," Clark said in an academy news release.

Hearing difficulties can also lead to behavioral problems, lack of focus and even depression.

Most infants have their hearing tested, but can develop hearing loss in subsequent years due to illness, genetic traits, exposure to loud noises or [ear infections](#).

Ear infections are common, affecting five out of six children in their first three years, audiologists say.

The total number of children in the United States with some type of hearing loss is unknown and many cases go undiagnosed. Children with hearing loss often don't realize they have a problem, and parents and teachers may not know the signs, according to the academy.

Possible indications of hearing loss in children include:

- difficulty following through with assignments and not seeming to understand the task;

- not keeping up in school;
- misunderstanding questions and either not responding or responding inappropriately;
- asking you to repeat things, or watching your face intently as you speak, trying to understand what you're saying.

Speech that differs from that of other kids the same age also can signal a hearing problem. Other indications: difficulty pronouncing simple words, inability to repeat a phrase, and language delays.

Kids who don't hear well on the phone, who speak loudly when not required, have chronic ear pain or complain of unidentifiable noises may also benefit from a hearing test, the experts said.

"Often parents and teachers overlook the fact that a child's behavior may be a sign of hearing loss," Clark said.

"If parents suspect an issue, they should have their child evaluated by an audiologist. Audiologists have the tools and training to identify hearing loss, degrees of [hearing loss](#), and can recommend solutions," she added.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on [hearing loss in children](#).

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