

CLASSROOM TIPS FOR TEACHERS

Masks and other face coverings can dampen sound, making it more difficult to understand speech and some higher-pitched voices. They can also take away visual cues that help students communicate. Physical distancing can also make it harder to hear. The American Speech Language Hearing Association recommends the following to teachers and school staff for in-person instruction.



GENERAL TIPS

- **Wear a clear mask, if possible.** Masks with a clear panel over the mouth can help students who are deaf, hard of hearing, or those with auditory processing deficits better understand what is being said as well as the speaker's emotions and intent by providing visual cues.
- **Consider a sound field FM system.** A sound field FM system involves a teacher wearing a microphone, amplifying their voice through a speaker. This benefits listening and learning for all students in the classroom. Also, it helps the teacher conserve their voice.
- **Consult with an educational audiologist.** Educational audiologists are experts in classroom acoustics. As teachers look to safely arrange their classrooms, an educational audiologist can advise teachers on how to set up an environment that enables effective communication.
- **Follow communication best practices.** Simple steps can foster communication, such as those that follow.

COMMUNICATION BEST PRACTICES

- **Get their attention.** Make sure you have the attention of your students before you start talking.
- **Speak slowly and slightly louder.** There is no need to shout or exaggerate your speech.
- **Optimize hearing.** Confirm that those who use hearing aids, cochlear implants, or assistive listening devices are wearing them. Use your eyes, hands, and body language to add information to your speech.
- **Optimize visual access.** Face students directly, and make sure nothing is blocking their view of you or the board/projector.
- **Provide visual support.** Accompany your instruction with visual aids and handouts as much as possible.
- **Ask for understanding.** Ask them to repeat important information to see whether they understood what you said. If they didn't, rephrase it or write it down.
- **Reduce competing noise.** Close doors and windows if possible. Make sure no students are seated near sources of noise. Use and enforce one-talker-at-a-time rules.

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