

## Educational Options for Children with Hearing Loss

Once a child has been diagnosed with hearing loss and fit with hearing aids, parents and professionals need to determine appropriate communication and education options. Communication options vary in combination with speech and manual components, while education opportunities can vary in terms of contact with peers with normal hearing ability.

### Communication Options

Options for communication include auditory-verbal, auditory-oral, cued speech, bilingual/bicultural and total communication.

A child using auditory-verbal communication relies on aided listening abilities in communication. No manual communication is taught, and attention to visual cues is not encouraged.<sup>1</sup>

People who use auditory-oral communication also are not taught formal modes of manual communication. They are, however, encouraged to speechread during conversation.<sup>1</sup>

Cued speech utilizes contextual visual information in the form of hand cues to distinguish speech sounds that look the same as when reading a speaker's lips.<sup>1</sup>

The bilingual/bicultural approach primarily entails communication with American Sign Language (ASL). English is learned as a second language.<sup>1</sup>

Total communication gives a person as many methods as possible for communication. To use this method, children learn to use simultaneously any combination of formal, English-based sign language, finger spelling, speechreading, body language and oral speech. Natural gestures and use of amplification also are encouraged.<sup>1</sup>

### Education Options

School-age children with an optimal level of speech comprehension who can use expressive language competently are likely to succeed in a mainstream environment with the use of hearing aids and possibly assistive listening devices, such as FM systems.

Children with communication issues may attend mainstream classes with a lighter linguistic load, such as physical education and art, and spend the rest of the day with peers who have hearing disabilities.<sup>2</sup> Children with pro-



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### For More Information

**Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**  
[www.agbell.org](http://www.agbell.org)

**Auditory-Verbal International**  
[www.auditory-verbal.org](http://www.auditory-verbal.org)

**Gallaudet University National Deaf Education Network & Clearinghouse**  
<http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/clearinghouse/index.html>

**National Association for the Deaf**  
[www.nad.org](http://www.nad.org)

**National Cued Speech Association**  
[www.cuedspeech.org](http://www.cuedspeech.org)

**Oberkotter Foundation**  
[www.oraldeafed.org](http://www.oraldeafed.org)

found hearing loss often attend a school for the deaf and are exposed exclusively to peers with hearing loss.

### Monitoring Progress

Regardless of the communication method employed or the setting decided upon for learning, children with hearing impairment are monitored for progress via an individualized education plan (IEP). This plan, required under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), maps out functional education goals for a child based on ability and material being taught in classes. Parents are notified of their child's progress on a regular basis and often participate in the planning process to learn how they can facilitate their child's communication and academic success at home.

### References

1. Communication Options Reference Chart, accessed via [www.beginningsvcs.com/communication\\_options\\_chart.htm](http://www.beginningsvcs.com/communication_options_chart.htm).
2. Edwards, C. (1996). Educational management of children with hearing loss. In *Hearing Care for Children* (Martin, F.N., Clark, J.G., eds.) Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

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