

# Interactions with deaf children learning EAL

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*Aims of our workshop:*

1) To give participants some background about deafness and EAL

2) Using video clips, to give participants practice

- spotting typical problems interacting with EAL deaf children
- devising strategies to overcome these
- having insight into their own strengths in interaction

We're assuming that teachers will be working with one or 2 deaf children in mainstream classrooms

I'll take this opportunity to mention a few issues that have informed our planning for today

## 1. How many EAL deaf children are there?

DfE numbers January 2011

22.3% of pupils in primary schools in England with first language known or believed to be other than English have a hearing impairment

Consortium for Research in Deaf Education (CRIDE) Survey August 2011 (BATOD)

Recent figures for Language/s used by deaf children at home

English only 73%

Sign language only 1%

English and sign language 8%

Other 3%

English and other spoken language 15%

...very many different languages !!

28% of children implanted at Great Ormond Street Hospital  
between 2005-2008 came from EAL families

Mahon et al 2011

## **2. Communication mode used with deaf children**

Intuitively we will use visual cues to aid our communication  
sign-like representational gestures; facial expression; lip-reading; writing,  
pointing etc

Deaf children will use all their resources to communicate

Lots of deaf children become 'bilingual' (bimodal) in spoken language &  
sign language - including EAL deaf children

However, we are going to focus on deaf children learning spoken language  
in our workshop

### 3. How do EAL deaf children acquire their first language?

From interactions with their parents & close family

It's not just about which languages are spoken,

but also the quality of language used

e.g. expansions etc

And the quantity of language...more is better...

But for children from EAL families where English is introduced very early,  
(early diagnosis & intervention)

it can be tricky to know what their L1 is –  
parents may have difficulties...

Usually language acquisition is delayed

Also, the medium of instruction at school is English,

When deaf children enter nursery class, they'll hear English from teachers & peers

But they haven't fully acquired their first language

& so continue the language acquisition process well into primary school

They do this through interaction with teachers/TAs/ peers at school in English

And with family at home in L1 and other languages,  
plus some English especially if there are older siblings also at school

#### **4. Advice to parents of deaf children exposed to two (or more) spoken languages**

Previously, advice to families erred on side of caution –  
speak only one language to deaf children

But now, advice to families is similar to hearing children:

- There is no 'right' way

- Use language with which you are most comfortable

- Talk to your child!

- Use all communication modes

  - especially visual cues representational gestures (sign-like gesture)

Lots of input so that child can acquire language (doesn't matter which one)

## **5. Can deaf children become bilingual in 2 spoken languages?**

Small body of research on deaf children from EAL families

Some encouraging findings  
deaf children can become bilingual in 2 spoken languages

Robbins et al 2004; Waltzman et al 2003; Thomas et al 2008

Some sobering findings about deaf children not being able to speak their L1  
to members of family - various reasons e.g. early intervention in English

Sharma & Love 1991; Mahon 2003; Ahmad et al 1998

## 6. What is considered to be a *successful outcome* for EAL deaf children and their families

Same as for any deaf child and her/his family:

fluent communicator; literate; educated; employed; happy; full member of society etc

but also

Bilingual? Multilingual? Bicultural? Monolingual?

This depends on family's expectations & motivations

May find that child gets better in English & chooses to use English

Especially as interactions at school will mainly be in English

So, in our workshop, we hope to give you some insight into effective interactions with deaf children

Today's workshop

Why are we focussing on interactions?

Because EAL deaf children need individual interactions

Hearing children absorb information from many sources including incidental language  
e.g. about high level grammar & metaphor/inference/idioms/abstracting

This is very important later on e.g. in SATS maths/science.

(Hearing EAL children may have same issue)

Deaf children don't get this input in the usual way, so we need to ensure that deaf EAL children get sufficient individual time to plug the gaps.

## Introductions

Any ToDs here today? Any specialist TAs or other support workers?

Working in Units? Resource base? Mainstream?

Any contact with deaf children or deaf /deafened adults in family

Experience of talking to deaf children

or children with any other communication difficulty

## *1. General deafness issues*

**There are over 45,000 deaf and hearing impaired children living in the UK**

15% of deaf children in education have EAL (DfE 2011; Cline & Mahon 2010)

Majority of these children are in inner cities (London, Midlands, North East)

Most come from hearing families

Few from signing families



## 1. General deafness issues

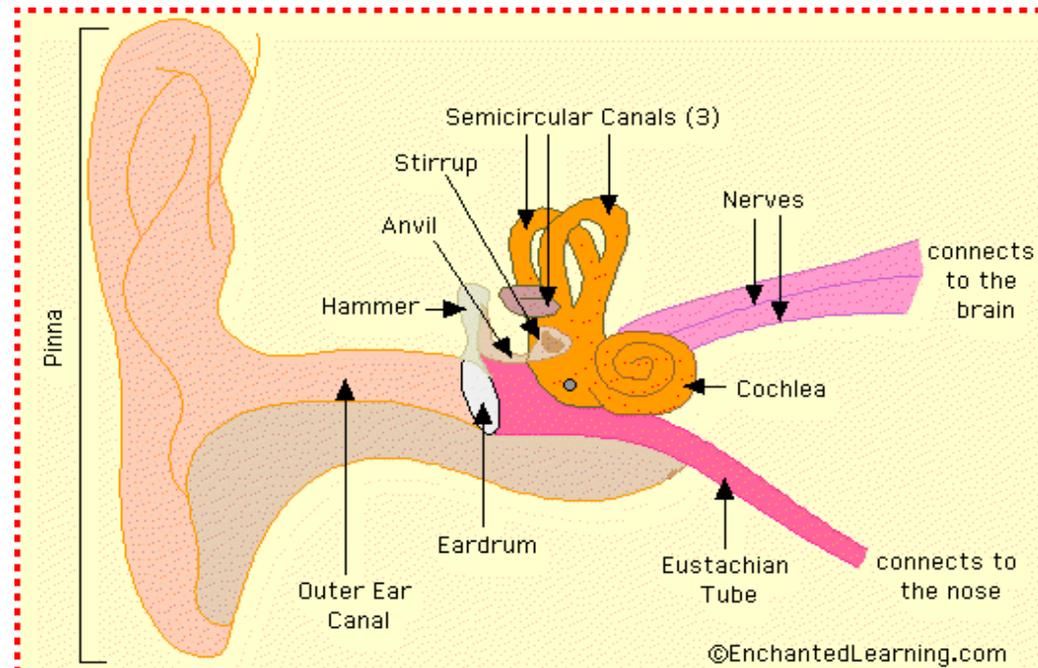
### Types of deafness

Newton 2009

Conductive: usually temporary (e.g. glue ear)

Sensori-neural: permanent (inner ear damaged)

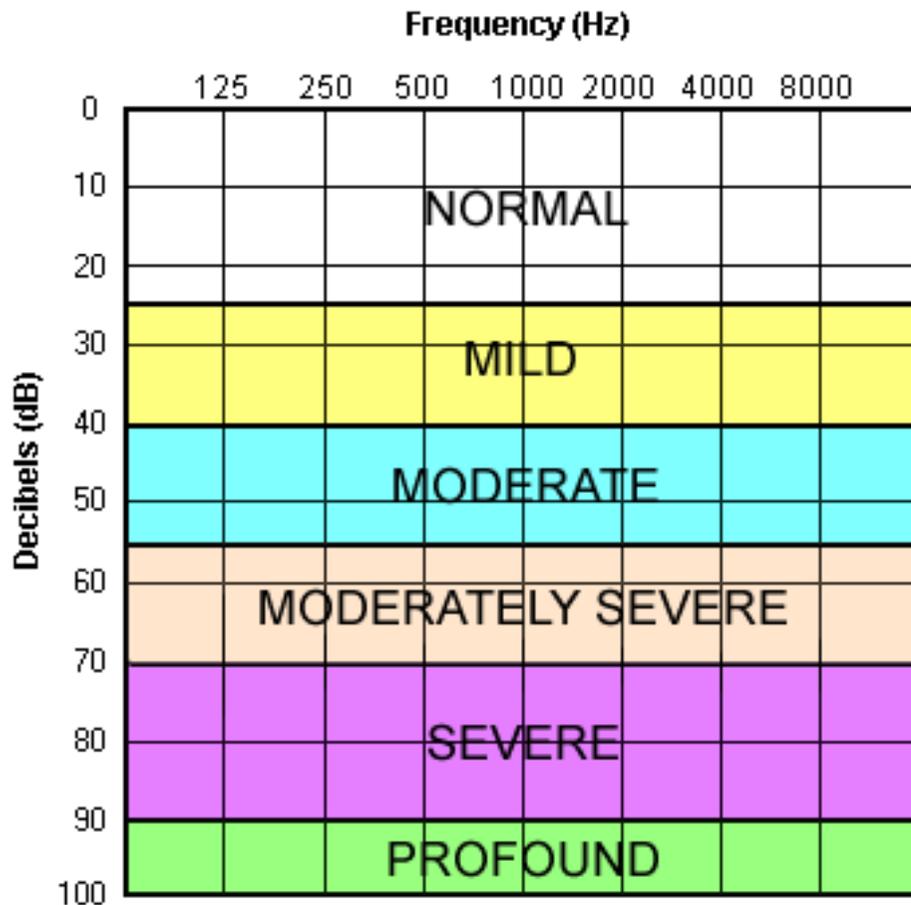
Mixed (e.g. deaf child with glue ear)



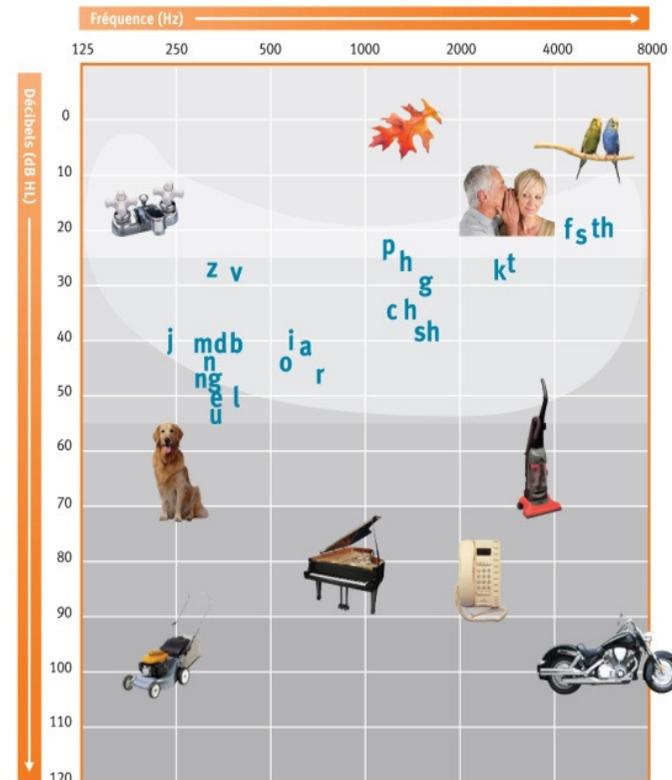
# 1. General deafness issues

## Degrees (levels) of deafness

On the audiogram



What this means for sounds in the world

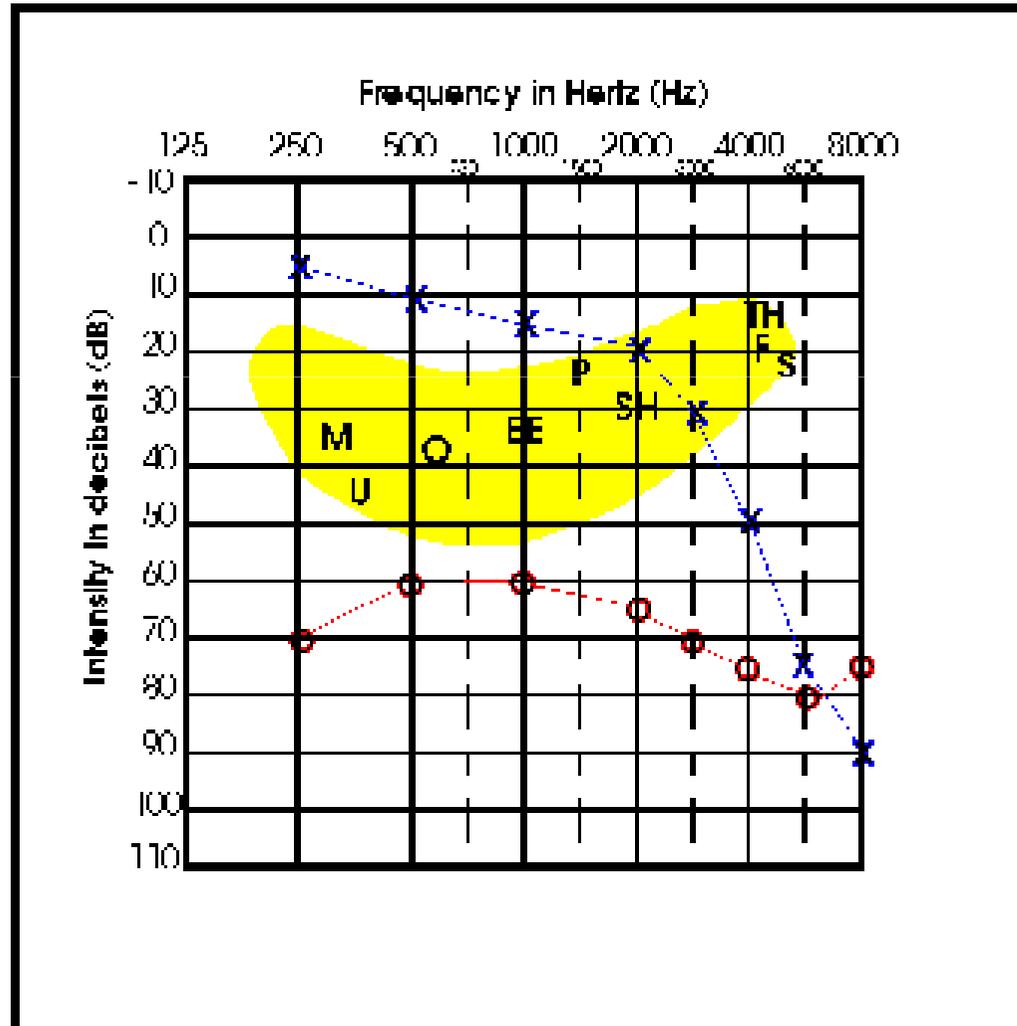


# 1. General deafness issues

How does hearing loss relate to listening to speech?

Blue:  
high frequency hearing loss

Red:  
severe hearing loss



## *1. General deafness issues*

### **Early Diagnosis (at birth)**

Newborn Hearing Screening Programme <http://hearing.screening.nhs.uk/>

Significant impact on the language development of deaf infants and children

Marschark & Spencer 2011

New refugee/asylum seekers , those from European Community

## 1. General deafness issues

### Hearing Aid Technology

Newton 2009; Cooper & Craddock 2006

#### Cochlear implants



About 8% of severe-profoundly deaf children have implants.  
Best outcome if implanted before age 2

#### Digital hearing aids



Most moderate-severely deaf children have bilateral digital hearing aids

**Catch them early!!!!**

## 1. *General deafness issues*

### **Most Deaf and hearing impaired children are developing spoken language**

80% are integrated into mainstream schools.

There are continued concerns over achievement and support but tide is turning.

NDCS key statement is

*Given the right support , there is no reason for any deaf child to develop language at a slower rate than a hearing child with similar abilities.*

Early diagnosis, technology, early intervention strategies .

## *1. General deafness issues*

**However, there are 2 very important truths:**

### 1. Families

90% of deaf children are born to hearing parents  
with little or no experience of deafness  
and little knowledge of how to communicate with a deaf person.

There is interruption of natural interaction in the early years

Esp families where English is not the first language  
(interventions will be in English)

They can also experience problems about

Managing child's hearing aids / cochlear implants

Anxieties around cochlear implant decisions

## *1. General deafness issues*

### **The second truth is that....**

However good modern hearing aid technology is (including cochlear implants)

it does not restore normal hearing

and the way in which this manifests itself for the child is different in every case

How a child hears

Impact on language development

## 1. *General deafness issues*

### **What is difficult?**

Incidental speech

Locating the speaker in a group

Listening in classroom, background noise

Listening without seeing speakers face



## 1. *General deafness issues*

### **What are the implications of these difficulties?**

Language development overall (grammar, vocabulary)

High pitched speech sounds important for grammar. (plurals and tense markers)

**pencils            he gets the book; she picked it up**

Intonation

- rising intonation for questions
- unstressed syllables e.g. **How are you vs how old are you**

Sounds that are not easily lip readable **take vs cake**

Sounds that look the same            **big vs pink vs pig**

## *1. General deafness issues*

### **Reasonable adjustments that can be made to help**

Legal requirement

Statements, Special School, Units

Technology Radio Aids/Soundfield Systems (who checks aids are working?)

Seating

INSET

Interactional strategies (learned today)

## *2. Video data & discussion*

Here's an example of good practice talking to deaf child using all communication resources

MA aged 4 years 1 month Somali family  
Severe bilateral deafness; hearing aids

Video clip

## *2. Video data & discussion*

Have a look at this clip of a deaf child and his teacher – MA again

Write down some thoughts about these points:

- What are the positive aspects of the conversation?
- Does the conversation run into trouble?
- Can you pinpoint the source of the trouble?
- What do the child and the teacher do to fix the trouble?

## Video Clip 1 'America Holiday'

MA aged 6 years 1 month Somali family  
Severe bilateral deafness wears hearing aids

Video clip 1

## 1. Video data & discussion

Two more video clips (AB & teacher; OA & teacher)

What are the positive aspects of the conversation?

What is the trouble?

e.g.

Misunderstanding by child

Misunderstanding by teacher

Too many questions asked by adults child doesn't get a chance to talk

Not responding to child's lead in talking

Not noticing child's use of gesture

How do T and C deal with this?

Using gesture to help understanding

Repetitions

Rephrasing

Asking questions

Abandon talk

## Video Clip 2 'Bangladesh Holiday'

AB aged 9 years 4 months Bengali/Sylheti family  
Severe bilateral deafness; wears hearing aids

Video clip 2

## Video Clip 3 'Red Bus'

OA aged 3 years 9 months Turkish family  
Severe bilateral deafness; wears hearing aids

Video clip 3

Deaf EAL children do make good progress over time...

Here are some examples.....

Compilation video clips

### *3. Plenary*

*Questions, comments...*

**Thank you!**

References & websites on your handouts

## References

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### **Websites**

National Deaf Children's Society: [www.ndcs.org.uk](http://www.ndcs.org.uk)

NB: You have to join NDCS in order to access the professional pages; it's free and there is useful information on the site

NHS Newborn Hearing Screening programme <http://hearing.screening.nhs.uk/>

Royal National Institute for Deaf People – Action on Hearing Loss: [www.rnid.org.uk](http://www.rnid.org.uk)

British Society of Audiology: <http://www.thebsa.org.uk/>

Useful section is Procedures and Publications where you can find the standard recommended procedures for audiological testing.

British Association of Teachers of the Deaf <http://www.batod.org.uk/>

Useful to look at the BATOD on-line Magazine which is written for education professionals.