



## **Advisory Teaching Service**

### **Advice sheet for Glue Ear**

This advice sheet has been written and produced by Gloucestershire Advisory Teaching Service Team for Hearing Impaired to help support children who experience difficulties with Glue Ear.

#### **What is a Glue Ear?**

Glue ear is one of the most common childhood conditions, also known as conductive hearing loss. Glue Ear is a result of a thick fluid that has built up in the middle ear cavity, which prevents sounds getting through to the inner ear and cochlear, resulting in a reduction in the intensity of sounds.

It is often linked with ear infections and is usually temporary, but long-term glue ear can affect children's hearing, speech development, and cause them to fall behind at school.

#### **Things to look out for which may indicate Glue Ear**

- *poor responses to questions or requests*
- *taking clues and cues from others*
- *strained listening and watching*
- *fluctuating levels of concentration*
- *inattentiveness, dreaming and withdrawal*
- *raised voice levels to gain attention*
- *signs of frustration, aggression and upset*
- *fluctuating classroom performance*
- *enjoyment of non listening tasks*
- *under achieving educationally*
- *Indistinct sounds of speech e.g. slushy or unclear*
- *Omission of speech sounds e.g. initial or final sounds 's' for 'f'*
- *Substitution of speech sounds e.g. incorrect use of 't' for 'd', 'k' for 'g'*
- *Poor discrimination of sounds      confusing 'not' with 'got'*

**If you suspect a child may have glue ear speak to the parents or carers and ask them to take the child to the GP and to request a hearing test**

#### **What is the treatment for Glue Ear?**

**Grommets:** Grommets are tiny plastic tubes that are put in the eardrum. They allow air to circulate in the middle ear and stop more fluid from building up. This is done during a short operation in hospital

under general anesthetic. The grommets are inserted after the fluid in the middle ear has been drained away.

**Hearing aids:** Hearing aids can be useful for children with any level of deafness. There are different types of hearing aid that are suitable for children with glue ear. Most hearing aids work by amplifying (making louder) sounds going into the ear. Good quality, digital hearing aids are available free of charge for all children on the NHS.

Staff should be aware of	Possible teaching, learning and support strategies
<p>Slower language development, both spoken and written with reduced vocabulary and understanding of words and concepts</p>	<p><b>Using photo diaries and experience books</b>            A labelled pictorial record of what the child has been doing and learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• helps the child recall concepts and vocabulary</li> <li>• provides a prompt for practising the language used</li> <li>• provides a basis on which to extend language</li> <li>• provides a means of informing parents, enabling further practice at home</li> <li>• enables parents to record activities at home for the child to talk about in the early years setting.</li> </ul> <p><b>Using routine and repetition</b>            The use of routine allows the repetition of language and actions that help the child to learn how to use language. A regular sequence or pattern of events enables a deaf child to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• predict and be ready for what is coming next when they find it difficult to pick up on incidental cues</li> <li>• practise the same words or phrases in the same context over and over</li> <li>• understand the context of what is being said so they can begin to link new words and ideas to what they already know</li> <li>• follow a familiar pattern of events they recognise and so be independent.</li> </ul> <p>Deaf children benefit from opportunities to repeat language patterns such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• learning action rhymes that use the same words with gradual additions</li> <li>• sharing story books that have their own routine (i.e. the pictures are in sequence; flaps need lifting and simple phrases are repeated, which can be predicted and said aloud)</li> <li>• games that require each child to follow the same pattern, where it is clear when it is your turn and what you are expected to do.</li> </ul>

<p>Listening skills and creating a good listening environment to ease tiring and energy used for listening</p>	<p>Make sure you have the child's attention before you start talking</p> <p>Get down to the child's eye level to enable them to focus on your speech and tune in to what you are saying</p> <p>Speak clearly and at your normal pace and allow the child to always see your face and lips</p> <p>Manage visual distraction, bright and bulky jewellery can be distracting</p> <p>Make sure any teaching is as visual as possible</p> <p>Reduce the reverberation and echo in room by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fitting curtains, carpets or blinds</li> <li>• Hanging mobiles/displays</li> <li>• Covering hard surfaces with fabric</li> <li>• Padding the bottom of trays or pencil pots with felt or foam</li> <li>• Using display drapes on the walls</li> <li>• Rubber tips on the bottom of chair and table legs</li> </ul> <p>Reduce the amount of background noise where possible by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closing doors and windows to noisy areas</li> <li>• Ensure heating systems operate within acceptable noise levels through regular maintenance</li> </ul>
<p>Working and auditory memory</p>	<p>Use pictures, illustrations and objects to support what is being said</p> <p>Make spoken instructions easier to follow by using pictures or by demonstrating what is expected</p> <p>Label areas of the room, storage boxes and cupboards using pictures as well as the word</p> <p>Use picture labels around the building, such as photos of other adults they may encounter, placed on the doors of the rooms they will normally be found in</p> <p>Use visual timetables to depict what will happen during the day in pictures or photos and are referred to regularly by members of staff</p> <p>Ensure routine activities are made as visual as possible to establish an understanding of what is happening.</p>
<p>Processing time</p>	<p>Ensure child has heard the task/request</p> <p>Give them more time to process information before</p>

	giving a response, do not be tempted to jump in.
Social skills and self esteem	<p>Provide opportunities for small group work requiring turn taking under the supervision of an adult</p> <p>In group time sit the children in a circle so the deaf child can see everybody's face</p> <p>Encourage the children to speak one at a time and repeat the other children's comments and contributions</p> <p>At story time include books of characters wearing hearing aids e.g. Freddie and the Fairy</p>

**Further information can be accessed via the following:**

- [www.ndcs.org.uk](http://www.ndcs.org.uk)
- [RNID - National hearing loss charity](#)

Please also contact the Advisory Teaching Hearing Impaired Team for further information and advice.

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