



**CHILDREN'S
LANGUAGE
ACQUISITION
SUPPORT
SYSTEM**



Children's Language Acquisition Support System

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Dear Principal,

As you may know, September is Deaf Awareness month and the last week of September is International Week of the Deaf (IWD). The purpose of this week is to increase deaf awareness. Worldwide activities and events throughout IWD encourage individuals to come together as a community for both educational events and celebrations. CLASS believes that one of the best ways to promote deaf awareness is to involve children in activities that help them relate to the difficulties that deaf people face in real life and the experiences they go through. We invite your school to participate in one or more of the "challenges" enclosed to help achieve this goal.

We encourage teachers to try the **Earplug or Can you Hear Me Challenge**. It is very difficult for people who are born hearing and develop spoken language in the usual way to understand or imagine what it can be like to be born deaf. However, it is possible up to a point to simulate hearing loss, by using ear-plugs, whisper or other similar device to cut out sound, and have some experience of what it is like not to be able to hear typically, even if only for a short time. If you would like for us to supply earplugs for the Earplug Challenge, please let us know and we are happy to deliver them to your school.

We have also provided a **Lip-Reading Challenge** which is a fun exercise for students to do where they will be more cognitively aware of the importance of focusing, concentration and body language when communicating. There is a common misperception that all Deaf, hard of hearing (DHH) or non-speaking people can lip read. It is estimated that only about 30 percent of speech is visible by looking at people's lips, and things like dim lighting, laughter, hand gestures, and accents can make it even more difficult. With "lip reading" many DHH people miss the majority of what is being said and like pieces of a puzzle, must work hard at trying to fit it all together. CLASS encourages teachers to show a four-minute film "**Can You Read My Lips?**". This short film explains just how hard it is to communicate in a world without sound. This video can be found on YouTube youtu.be/n1jLkYyODsc. We also have provided resources to participate in our **ASL 10 Day Challenge**. Some Deaf people are not able to learn how to talk but hearing people do have the ability to learn how to sign. As part of promoting Deaf Awareness month we encourage students and staff to take this challenge and see how much sign language they can learn in 10 days! Feel free to contact us for other signs that may suit your classroom needs better or visit lifeprint.com.

We hope your school will join us and the 3.2 million Deaf and hard of hearing people in Canada in celebrating IWD. Classes who participate are encouraged to use #NLCLASS. If you wish to discuss this further, please contact me at info@nlclass.com. Thank you for supporting Deaf Awareness in your school!

Sincerely,

Kimberly Churchill

Kimberly Churchill
Chair, CLASS

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Classroom activities that help children identify the difficulty deaf and hard of hearing children face.

IDEAL FOR ALL AGES!

CAN YOU HEAR ME CHALLENGE:

Have all children sit in a circle.

1. Choose 2 children to sit back-to-back in the middle.
2. Tell them to have a conversation (you can provide a topic) while everyone else is quiet
3. Now have everyone start talking to their neighbor (30 seconds).
4. Have everyone be quiet.
5. Ask the students in the middle if their ability to hear changed.
6. Discuss how difficult it gets to listen the louder it gets.
7. Choose 2 more children to sit in the middle. All their backs to each other and give them a topic to discuss.
8. After 15 seconds have the rest of the class start talking.
9. After about a minute ask everyone to stop talking.
10. Discuss the difference in listening ability when there is no eye contact and when there is environmental noise and distractions.
11. Choose 6 more students to sit in the middle. Have them sit back to back in a row.
12. Repeat steps 8, 9, 10.
13. Send everyone back to their seats and discuss the activity:
 - How did you feel talking without looking at the person?
 - Why is eye contact so important?
 - What happened when everyone in the circle started talking?
 - Imagine how much more difficult listening becomes when you don't hear the same as everyone.
 - It is hard to hear every sound in a conversation, and we often assume or make guesses about word without even knowing it. It's hard to fill in the blanks when you don't hear the sentence in the first place.

ASL 10 DAY CHALLENGE:

Attached is the American Sign Language (ASL) 10-day challenge! Each day suggested 'signs' are pictured including the ASL alphabet. Learning the manual alphabet in American Sign Language will help you when you don't know a sign as you begin communicating. If you don't know the sign for something, you need to use the manual alphabet to spell the word, or *fingerspell*. These pictures can be supplemented with online videos which give a better demonstration of signing. We recommend lifeprint.com or signingtime.com. Have fun learning this visual language and perhaps play "Signing Bee" (similar concept to Spelling Bee) after the challenge is finished and reward the students for their commitment!



IDEAL FOR GRADE 3+

EARPLUG CHALLENGE:

In a class exercise, using ear-plugs and working in pairs, try to discover from your partner;

- Their favourite character from a TV show, and why they like them.
- Any person that they admire and why.
- What are the things they enjoy doing the most?
- What do they really dislike.

Try and note down the feelings you have whilst doing this. For example, are you conscious of other people watching? Do you feel comfortable in this situation? What parts of the conversation did you find particularly tricky?

Now move outside of the place you have been working, either into the school playground, hall or other location. Try and note down what this experience feels like when moving about. Are you conscious of other people suddenly appearing? Does your own voice feel strange? Do you think you may be shouting?

When you go home (you can remove the ear-plugs) spend some time looking at the TV without the sound on and note what it's like trying to follow what's going on. Then try using closed captioning, still with the sound off. Finally, have the sound and captioning on, and note what captioning and small details you would miss out on if you had captioning alone.

(Note, questions can be adapted to allow more specific learning opportunities to suit classroom needs and students age)

LIP-READING CHALLENGE:

Students will be in teams of two. On the smart board have the words from A displayed only. Student A faces the board to be able to lip read the words while Student B is facing Student A with their back to the board. When A is finished students will switch. Smart board will then display B words for Student B to lip read. When B is finished students switch again to try the sentence challenge using same format as above.

- B. Queen, Wing, Ring, Dream, Stream, Tree, Chair, Cheer, Jeer, Water, Hotter, Tan, Ten, Land, Lend, Lint, Yellow, Hello.
- C. Chump, Jump, Real, Reel, Rail, Hoarder, Quarter, Write, Cry, Dry, Try, Tray, Gas, Guess, Step, Stab, Yippee, Hippie.

Mouth the sentences as you would when typically speaking. Need a word repeated? The full sentence must be mouthed entirely. Voices remain off.

- A. Do you like music?
I prefer French toast over waffles.
Can you understand anything I'm saying?
Where's the bathroom?
There's no sugar in my tea.
- B. I went to the fair this weekend.
Did you eat a burger or nachos for lunch?
Let's watch a Disney Channel movie.
They want to go to the football game.
Is Winter your favorite season?

Open discussion after describing what did they notice? More focus, more body language used/noticed.