



CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE ACQUISITION SUPPORT SYSTEM



Children's Language Acquisition Support System

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c/o Newfoundland Labrador English School District
Avalon Regional Office
95 Elizabeth Avenue
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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 public awareness of deaf issues, people, and culture. 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 these activities to help achieve this goal.

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 earplugs, 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. We encourage teachers to try the **Earplug Challenge**. This challenge is a class exercise whereby students using earplugs and working in pairs try to discover information from one another. (Sample questions and considerations are attached). If students are uncomfortable wearing earplugs the same results can be achieved by whispering at a distance or "turning voices off" and simply mouthing questions.

There is a common misperception that all Deaf, hard of hearing (DHH) or non-speaking people can lip read. It's a little more complicated. 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 all 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 <https://youtu.be/n1jLkYyODsc>. 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.

We hope your school will join us and the 3.2 million Deaf and hard of hearing people in Canada in celebrating IWD. If you would like for us to supply earplugs for your challenge, please let us know and we are happy to deliver them to your school (we have a limited supply so please notify us early). Classes who participate are encouraged to use #NLCLASSEarplugChallenge or #NLCLASSLipReadingChallenge. 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



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.

- A. Queen, Wing, Ring, Dream, Stream, Tree, Chair, Cheer, Jeer, Water, Hotter, Tan, Ten, Land, Lend, Lint, Yellow, Hello.
- B. 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.