

*(Approved by the Board of Directors of the Educational Audiology Association September 13, 2006)*

Classrooms are auditory- verbal environments where listening is the primary modality for learning (C. Flexer, 1995.) The Educational Audiology Association (EAA) asserts that educational audiologists are the professionals uniquely qualified to ensure that all students have adequate access to auditory information in educational settings/schools.

Students with any degree or type of hearing impairment, including unilateral or fluctuating hearing loss or an auditory processing disorder, require the expertise of an educational audiologist. In addition, students with learning disabilities, reading/literacy difficulties, attentional problems, and those struggling with English as a second language benefit from the educational audiologist's knowledge of how learning is impacted by noise and poor classroom acoustics. Educational audiologists interact directly with parents, teachers, nurses, related service personnel and function as part of the educational team.

The education and training of audiologists includes a strong scientific, diagnostic, and rehabilitative focus. Audiologists are bound by professional ethics and licensing requirements to ensure that the best interests of those they serve are met. Educational audiologists have the additional expertise in the effects of hearing and auditory processing deficits on student's access to curriculum.

Educational audiologists are unique. The roles and responsibilities of educational audiologists may vary from one educational setting to another, but always extend beyond diagnostics. Their practice does not necessarily stop with intervention for a student identified with a hearing loss and/or auditory disorder. Hearing conservation programs, hearing screening programs and general education classroom acoustics are all areas within the purview of the educational audiologist. Providing consultation to the school nurse on screening programs, the speech language pathologist for communication strategies, or a classroom teacher regarding acquisition of the phonemic information so critical to literacy -- all are within the scope of practice of the educational audiologist.

Educational Audiologists' expertise typically includes:

- Being well-informed on federal and state (provincial) legislation, as well as local regulations and policies related to audiology services for children ages birth to 21.
- Knowledge and skills to obtain and interpret objective data to evaluate and monitor the combined effects of hearing loss/auditory disorder and classroom acoustics.
- Comprehensive knowledge of the effects that hearing loss and auditory processing disorders (APD) can have on communication, academic performance and psycho-social development.
- Skills and tools to assess students' functional ability to access auditory information in the classroom, which is a critical link between diagnostic information, educational accommodations, and program planning.
- Guidance in the provision and management of accommodations and essential assistive listening technology thus improving the student's access to auditory information.
- Knowledge, skills and resources to educate students about their hearing impairments
- In depth understanding of current hearing aid and cochlear implant technology and how best to interface this with assistive listening technologies.
- The selection and fitting of amplification for classroom or other school related use.
- Ability to ensure that amplification is working properly and effectively through direct instruction to students on its use, the inservicing of school personnel on its use, its limitations, and specific troubleshooting techniques as well as verification measures of existing fitting using standard assessment protocols.
- Provision of consultation, collaboration and/or direct remediation in the areas of auditory training and speechreading necessary for greater success in communication for all students with hearing loss, students using hearing aids or cochlear implants or students with a diagnosed auditory processing disorder.

- Education of students and school personnel about the prevention of hearing loss.
- Thorough understanding classroom acoustics and appropriate modifications.

The efforts of educational audiologists to ensure access to auditory information in the educational environment provide a foundation for all learning. Their expertise is considerably different from that of other professionals/related service providers who typically serve students from an academic, social-emotional and/or speech language perspective. Together as a team, the educational audiologist and other professionals can most effectively address the student's needs.

The Educational Audiology Association affirms that audiologists working in the educational setting are best qualified to match the needs of each student with available classroom space and acoustics, instructional styles, and other environmental factors. This match will enable the student to meet general education requirements. The educational audiologist is a school's best resource for recommending and maintaining the appropriate assistive listening technologies for the student and the classroom team. Educational audiologists connect diagnostic audiological information to the day-to-day impact of hearing impairment and provide a foundational support for the other team members and the student. With educational audiologists as active team members, students can be increasingly enabled to meet general education requirements and have improved educational outcomes.

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