

Communication tips for helping a child with Glue Ear

Glue ear occurs most commonly in children when fluid collects in the middle ear space of one or both ears often following ear infections or repeated colds. As a result, the eardrum and tiny bones in the middle ear cannot move properly and sound cannot so easily pass through to the inner ear. When glue ear lasts a long time, the associated hearing loss can cause children problems with speech and difficulties communicating or socialising.

This factsheet contains a range of tips to help parents, carers and teachers communicate better with a child whose hearing is affected by glue ear. These can potentially reduce the impact of the condition on the child, helping them to feel better understood and less frustrated, which may in turn improve their behaviour.

For information on the signs of glue ear, causes, treatments and other self-help guidance, contact the Deafness Research UK Information Service.

If your child is having difficulty hearing, try using the following tactics:

1 When speaking, first **attract your child's attention** by calling his/her name or by touch.



2 Avoid having an important conversation with your child in a room with hard surfaces, like a kitchen, because hard surfaces create echoes, making it more difficult to hear. **Choose a room with soft furnishings and carpet, such as a sitting room, if possible.**



4 Talk face to face, sitting or bending to the same level as your child, if possible. Try to have light on your face and avoid standing in front of a window which makes lipreading difficult.



3 Cut down background noise - turn down any music and the television when you are talking to your child. Avoid speaking to your child against background chatter



5 Speak up and speak clearly, but don't shout. Be direct, keeping requests short and simple. Try to give visual or spoken clues if you are changing to a new topic.



6 When talking with your child, **check that they are listening and watching**. Check as you go along that they have understood.



7 **Tell your child's teacher** if your child has glue ear. Let the teacher know when your child is in a 'good phase' or a 'bad phase.' Ask them to move your child to the front of the class and reduce background noise. They should also be able to let you know if your child needs any extra help at home or school.



8 If your child has a friend they play with a lot, **tell his/her parents** about the hearing problem caused by glue ear. Why not give them a copy of this guide?



9 Children with poor hearing or speech may find it difficult to pick up information at nursery or school. You can help by **spending extra time with your child** at home talking together, or going over some of their lessons to check they have understood what they did in class. Playing word games like I-Spy is fun for the family and may help your child's speech, language and reading.



10 Remember, children with glue ear often feel frustrated and left out. This can lead to behaviour that seems naughty. Try to understand and deal with the cause of the problem first. If your child has not done something (s)he was asked to do, **check that (s)he has heard your initial instruction.**



FURTHER INFORMATION

If any of your questions concerning glue ear have not been answered by reading this factsheet, contact the Deafness Research UK Information Service for further assistance. If our information team cannot answer your enquiry directly, it will be referred to one of our scientific or medical advisers.

Open: 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., Monday to Friday (a message can be left at other times).

Freephone: 0808 808 2222

Textphone: 020 7915 1412

E-mail: info@deafnessresearch.org.uk

or click the 'ask question' option from our website homepage:

www.deafnessresearch.org.uk

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Deafness Research UK is the only national medical research charity dedicated to helping people with deafness, tinnitus or other hearing problems.

Scientists are now predicting that within the next ten to fifteen years there could be a cure for some forms of deafness and much more effective treatments for tinnitus. Deafness Research UK is at the forefront of this work.

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Deafness Research UK, 330-332 Gray's Inn Rd, London WC1X8EE

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