

Guiding the
**HARD OF HEARING
CHILD**

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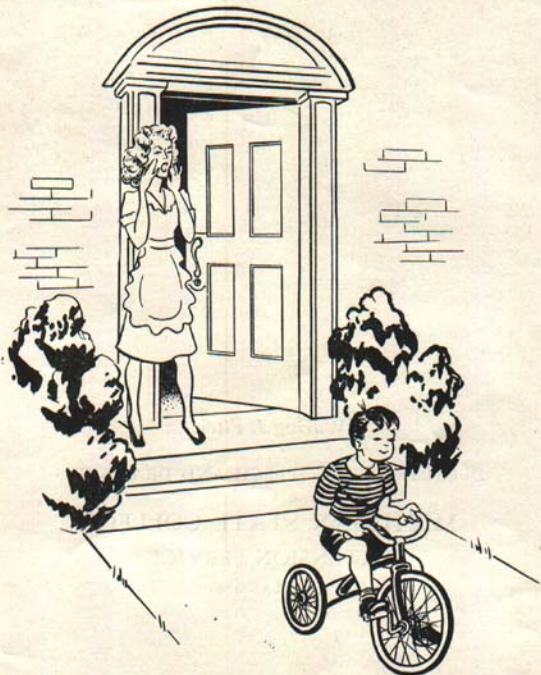
EAST LANSING

Guiding the Hard of Hearing Child

By WARING J. FITCH

A recent survey made by the National Education Association found that at least 10 percent of American children of school age had varying degrees of hearing loss. The hard of hearing, or deafened child, is often misunderstood by his parents and teachers, because they do not realize his handicap. Purpose of this bulletin is to assist parents and teachers in recognizing and meeting the needs of the hard of hearing child.

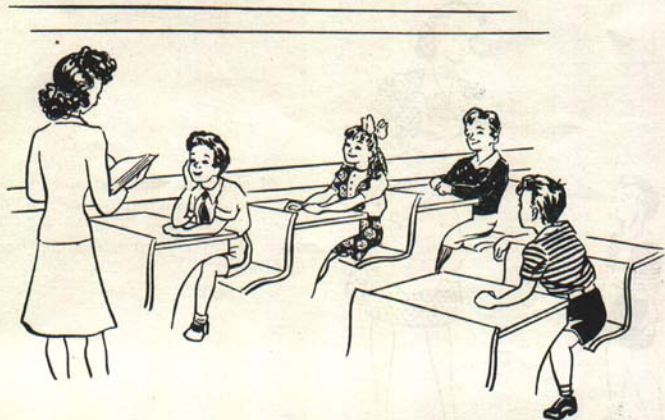
RECOGNIZING THE HARD OF HEARING CHILD



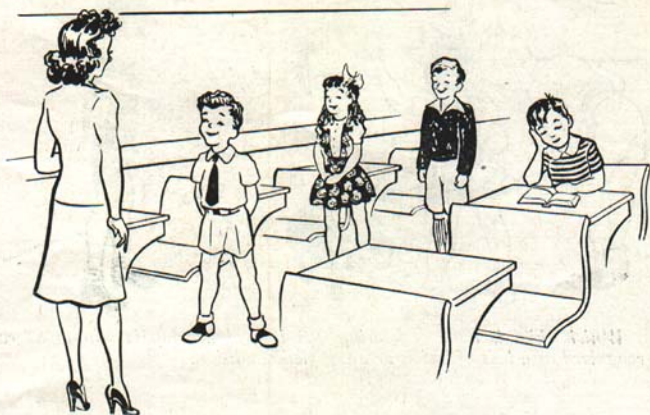
The child who does not come when he is called may not be disobedient. He may be hard of hearing.



Which child is hard of hearing? A loss of hearing is seldom as easily recognized as a loss of vision or a crippled condition.



The child who has repeated grades or who is restless and inattentive in school may not be hearing accurately.



The child who does not follow directions well may not hear them as other children do.



A child who has a strained facial expression, who turns one ear toward the speaker, or who asks to have things repeated, may be hard of hearing.

An infant who does not respond to loud noises or a young child who does not begin to talk by the age of three years may have defective hearing. The child of 6 years or older who has defective speech may not hear the sounds he says incorrectly. The child who has an unusually loud or shrill voice may be speaking so that he can hear himself.

FIRST STEPS IN HELPING THE HARD OF HEARING CHILD

When a teacher suspects a child of having decreased hearing she should report the matter to the school nurse. The nurse may test the child's hearing. If she finds a hearing loss she will confer with the parents, urging them to have the child examined by the family physician or an ear specialist.

When a mother thinks her child is hard of hearing she may ask the public health nurse to test the child's hearing or take the child directly to the family physician or ear specialist. She may take the child to a college or university speech clinic for a hearing examination.

Poor hearing is sometimes caused by diseased tonsils and adenoids. Hearing may be impaired by high fevers, as in scarlet fever, by spinal meningitis, a blow on the head, or childhood diseases as chicken pox, measles or mumps. Some children are born with poor hearing.

It is commonly thought that ear disease and decreased hearing are not serious in childhood. Parents sometimes believe that these conditions will clear up without medical treatment. This is not true. Nature will seldom cure the disease or restore the hearing if denied a reasonable chance. In too many cases, putting off a visit to the physician lessens the chance for recovery and results in a permanent loss of hearing. An earache or the discharge of matter from the ear is a sign of trouble and the child should be placed in the doctor's care. Delay may result in partial or complete deafness. When a doctor is consulted, the school nurse and teacher should be informed of his findings and recommendations. In some cases the doctor may suggest treatment or surgery, or that the child be fitted with a suitable hearing aid. Great care should be taken in the selection of a hearing aid and in training the child to use it effectively. Most college or university speech clinics will assist parents in this selection and training at little or no cost.

If a limited family income might cause delay in carrying out the physician's recommendations, ask your school or county nurse to explain to you the provisions of the Afflicted Children's Act. If the child is sixteen or over, write for assistance to the State Board of Control for Vocational Rehabilitation. Your public health nurse can give you the address of the office nearest your home. You may ask the nurse to write the letter for you. Any physically handicapped child in Mich-

igan is eligible for the services of these agencies. Upon request a representative will call at your home to help work out a program suited to the needs of the child.

THE HARD OF HEARING CHILD AT HOME

A deafened child should be treated as much as possible like a normally hearing child. At home he should share in the family duties such as setting the table, washing the dishes, going to the store, keeping his clothes picked up and doing his reasonable share of work on the farm. It will always be necessary to make certain he understands what is expected of him. He should be given recognition for a job well done. His hearing loss should not excuse him from leading a well rounded life, receiving his share of affection in the home and receiving discipline when it is needed. He should be made to feel that he is as important and secure as others in the family, and yet never pampered because of his disability. A great deal of harm can be done to the personality of the deafened child if he is spoiled and not taught to be self reliant. Every effort should be made to keep him in good physical health since there is a definite relationship between good health and good hearing.

Parents can do much toward helping the child learn to read lips by facing the child directly when speaking to him. The light should always fall on the speaker's face. Speak clearly and naturally at a moderate rate of speed. Be patient when the child asks to have a statement or word repeated.

THE HARD OF HEARING CHILD AT SCHOOL

The deafened child will need special consideration at school. If he is severely deafened he may have to attend a special class or school for hard of hearing children. Most cities have these classes which are under the guidance of teachers specially trained to teach the child lip reading and speech as well as the regular school subjects. The number of children in each class is small so that the teacher may give each child the individual attention he needs. If your city or town does not have such a class, the child may receive this special training without charge at the Michigan School for the Deaf in Flint. This school is equipped to serve any hearing handicapped child in Michigan from kindergarten through high school. Here is a list of Michigan cities which maintain classes for the hard of hearing as a regular part of the city school system.

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| Battle Creek | Fordson | Kingsford |
| Bay City | Grand Rapids | Lansing |
| Benton Harbor | Hamtramck | Manistique |
| Dearborn | Holland | Muskegon |
| Detroit | Ironwood | Saginaw |
| Dowagiac | Jackson | Traverse City |
| Escanaba | Kalamazoo | Ypsilanti |
| Ferndale | | |

A child with a less severe hearing loss, if given certain considerations, will be able to attend school with normal children. In school, as at home, he should be treated as much as possible like the others of his age group. His efforts in school, though sometimes sub-standard when compared with those of his classmates, should receive ample recognition and reward. He should be made to feel as important as others in the class. Emphasis should be placed on the things he can do; his limitations should not be constantly brought to his attention or to the attention of others.

For the Teacher—Suggestions for Handling the Deafened Child in the Classroom

1. Seat the child who has a hearing loss in both ears near the front and center of the room. If he has a severe loss in one ear, seat him on a side of the room with his good ear toward the class. If the room is very noisy seat him with his good ear toward the wall.
2. When speaking, face the class squarely. Avoid unnecessary movement of the head. Stand so the light is on your face. This will give the child opportunity to see as well as hear what you say. Standing with your back to the light causes shadows on your face and makes it difficult for the child to look into the glare behind you. Many hard of hearing children acquire a working knowledge of lip reading without any formal training.
3. When presenting some new principle in arithmetic or explaining directions for a game make sure the child understands you. If he is unable to do the thing as directed he will be subject to ridicule from his classmates. Sometimes it may be best to explain things to the child before school or at recess so that he will be able to "hold his own" with his classmates.
4. When children recite, direct the attention of the class to the child who is speaking so that the hard of hearing child will not feel conspicuous as he turns to listen and watch what is said.
5. You may not have time to give the child all the assistance he needs. Parents must share in the responsibility of his education. Ask

them to tutor the child at home in subjects which are difficult for him. Brief and frequent progress reports will keep parents informed as to their child's needs in this matter.

6. Cooperate fully with the speech correctionist and lip reading teacher in scheduling the child for these special services if they are available in your school. Follow carefully suggestions made by these special teachers for the welfare of the child.

There is no question that the hard of hearing child faces life at a disadvantage. Too often a hearing loss results in the emotional strain of undeserved scoldings, insults, crude jokes and ridicule. The result may be a retardation in the child's education and adjustment to life. Only with intelligent cooperation of doctor, parent and teacher can the hearing handicap be minimized so that the child can lead a useful and happy life.

SUGGESTED READINGS

1. The Volta Bureau, 1537 35th Street N. W., Washington, D. C. A center for information about deafness, lip reading, hearing aids, and many other phases of deafness. A list of bulletins will be sent upon request.
2. *The Newer Method of Speech Reading for the Hard of Hearing Child*, by Olive Whilden and Agatha Scally. John William Eckenrode Co., Westminster, Md.
3. *Speech Reading, Jena Method* by Anna M. Bunger. The Interstate Press, Dansville, Ill.
4. *Lip Reading for Children*, by Cora Kinzie and Rose Kinzie, John C. Winton Co., Philadelphia, Pa.
5. *Lip Reading for Class Instruction*, Louise I. Morgenstern. Noble and Noble, Publishers, New York, N. Y.
6. *Lip Reading Principles and Practices*, Edward B. Nitchie, Fredrick A. Stokes Co., New York, N. Y.
7. *Lip Reading for the Deafened Child—A Handbook for Teachers*, Agnes Stowell, Estelle Samuelson, Ann Lehman. The MacMillan Co., New York, N. Y.

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