

 **TABLE 12.3** Impact of Hearing Loss on Students

Degree of Hearing Loss	Possible Psychosocial Impact of Hearing Loss	Effect of Hearing Loss on Speech and Language	Possible Educational Needs
Minimal or borderline: 16- to 25-dB loss	May be unaware of subtle conversational cues, causing student to be viewed as inappropriate or awkward. May miss portions of fast-paced peer interactions, which could begin to have an impact on socialization and self-concept. May exhibit immature behavior. Pupil may be more fatigued than classmates because of greater listening effort.	May have difficulty hearing faint or distant speech. At 15 dB, student can miss up to 10% of speech when teacher is at a distance greater than 3 feet or when the classroom is noisy.	May benefit from a hearing aid, personal FM system, favorable seating, or sound field amplification if classroom is noisy. May need attention to vocabulary or speech, especially with recurrent otitis media history. Teacher in-service required.
Mild: 26- to 40-dB loss	Barriers beginning to build, with negative impact on self-esteem as student is accused of "hearing only when he or she wants to," "daydreaming," or "not paying attention." Begins to lose ability for selective hearing and has increasing difficulty suppressing background noise, which makes the learning environment stressful. Is more fatigued than classmates because of required listening effort.	At 30 dB, may miss 25%–40% of speech. The degree of difficulty experienced will depend upon the noise level in the classroom, the distance from the teacher, and the configuration of the hearing loss. Without amplification, the pupil with a 35- to 40-dB loss may miss at least 50% of class discussions, especially when voices are faint or speaker is not in line of vision. Will miss consonants, especially when a high-frequency hearing loss is present.	Will benefit from a hearing aid, personal FM system, or sound field system. Favorable seating and lighting required. Needs auditory skill building and attention to vocabulary and language development, as well as articulation and speechreading. Teacher in-service required.
Moderate: 41- to 55-dB loss	Communication is often significantly affected, and socialization with hearing peers becomes increasingly difficult. With full-time use of hearing aids or FM systems, student may be viewed as a less competent learner. Increasing impact on self-esteem.	Understands conversational speech at a distance of 3–5 feet (face-to-face) only if structure and vocabulary controlled. Without amplification, the amount of speech missed can be 50%–75% with a 40-dB loss and 80%–100% with a 50-dB loss. Is likely to have delayed or defective syntax, limited vocabulary, imperfect speech production, and atonal voice quality.	Amplification is essential (hearing aids and FM system). Special education support may be needed, especially for primary-grade students. Attention to oral language development, reading, and written language. Auditory skill development and speech therapy is usually needed. Teacher in-service required.
Moderate to severe: 56- to 70-dB loss	Full-time use of hearing aids or FM systems may result in pupil being judged by peers and adults as a less competent learner. Poor self-concept and diminished social maturity may contribute to feelings of rejection.	Without amplification, conversation must be very loud to be understood. A 55-dB loss can cause student to miss up to 100% of oral information. Will have marked difficulty in situations requiring verbal communication in both one-to-one and group situations. Delayed language, syntax, reduced speech intelligibility, and atonal voice quality are likely.	Full-time use of amplification is essential. Will need a resource teacher or special class placement depending on the magnitude of language delay. Will likely require assistance with language skills and academic subjects. In-service of general educators required.