



Department of Health  
Children with Special Health Needs  
Hearing Advisory Council  
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## Potential Educational Impact of Fluctuating, Mild, and/or Unilateral Hearing Loss

1. Delayed speech and language development
2. Poor attention skills
3. Difficulty following directions
4. Problems with phonemic awareness, which can result in reading delays
5. Delayed social skills
6. Difficulty hearing in noise
7. Difficulty localizing sound
8. Poor organizational skills
9. Fatigue
10. Decreased background knowledge

**A referral to an audiologist could provide valuable information about the child's ability to access auditory information in the classroom. The audiologist may choose to refer the student to a consultant from Vermont Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. This would allow the school to make appropriate accommodations to support academic success.**

*N.B: We are aware that **a)** recent research has indicated that there is no long term educational impact associated with fluctuating hearing loss, and that **b)** some researchers believe that PE tubes may be ineffective and sometimes harmful. While we are not advancing any particular medical treatment, we are advocating for audiological and educational intervention. In our experience, children with chronic otitis media, unilateral hearing loss, or mild hearing loss can have difficulty learning in a noisy environment. Moreover, it has been well established that support in the early years is critical to listening and language learning, further bolstering the need for early referral.*

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