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## **The Sound of Learning**

### **Is Your Child's Classroom Conducive to Learning?**

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Do you remember the last time you were in a noisy restaurant and how frustrating it was to try to understand the conversation across the table? Many of our children's classrooms are not any quieter. Learning involves listening, and classrooms with lower noise levels support academic success for all children and particularly for those with hearing loss. Every teacher in the early elementary school years can expect to have one-fourth to one-third of their children experiencing a hearing loss on any given day! Although some of them have a permanent hearing loss, most are experiencing a fluctuating loss often associated with recurring middle ear infections.

Even a mild hearing loss makes a child 10 times more likely to suffer academically than their normal-hearing classmates. Hearing loss is "invisible" and occurs more often than most of us realize. Children with hearing loss are more easily fatigued in class because of the extra effort needed to hear. These children are often seen as having an attention or behavioral issue when the source of the problem is actually a hearing loss.

Several simple no-cost changes can improve the listening environment:

- Closing the classroom door to eliminate hallway noises
- Covering hard-walled surfaces with sound absorbent materials
- Tennis balls placed on the end of chair legs reduce noise when chairs are being moved on hard floors
- Teachers face the classroom during instruction
- Using visual aids whenever possible

Better classroom acoustics enhance the opportunity for understanding and learning for all.

Anyone concerned about his or her child's hearing or interested in scheduling a back to school hearing check-up, call 614.261.5452 or e-mail [hearing@columbusspeech.org](mailto:hearing@columbusspeech.org).

*Columbus Speech & Hearing Center, founded in 1923, is a non-profit United Way organization serving more than 10,000 people annually. Services include hearing evaluations, hearing aids, speech therapy for children and adults, occupational therapy and treatment, and vocational services for people who are Hard-of-Hearing, Deaf and Deaf-Blind through the Comprehensive Program for the Deaf and Ohio Deaf-Blind Outreach Program. Generous charitable giving from the community help offset the cost of the Center's valued services for low-income families.*