



[This page prints out on 3 sheets]

Is Your Child Ready for a Mainstream School?

Use this checklist to see if your child is ready for the mainstream.

Are you thinking about sending your child to a mainstream school? Going to a school with mostly hearing children can have its rewards. But it can also be tough. Before you make your final decision, ask yourself if this is the right choice for your child:

- Is your child ready to go to a school where she may be the only deaf student?
- Is the school ready and willing to help your child learn?
- Are you ready to help your child with any problems that may come up?

Use this checklist to see if you and your child are ready for the mainstream. You don't have to have all the points on the list. But the more you have, the better the chances are that your child will do well in school.

Your child may do better in the mainstream if she:

- **Knows how well she can communicate with other people.**
Your child will be in classes with mainly hearing people. Does she know how well she can communicate with hearing people? If she does, she can try things that can help her communicate better with them.
- **Can use her [hearing aid](http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/help/tech/hearingaids/) (<http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/help/tech/hearingaids/>), [cochlear implant](http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/help/tech/ci/) (<http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/help/tech/ci/>) or [FM system](http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/help/tech/ald/index.jsp#fm) (<http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/help/tech/ald/index.jsp#fm>) on her own.**
Your child should know how to keep them on. And she should be able to tell when they're not working. That way, she can tell the teacher when there's a problem.
- **Can ask for help in class.**
Your child may be the only deaf student in the class. And the teacher may not understand what kind of helps she needs. So it will be up to your child to ask for this help. This could be from asking for the teacher's notes, to getting extra help after school, to setting up a study group. Anything that will help her learn.
- **Can work with an interpreter well, if she uses one.**
This means paying attention to the interpreter, and what's going on in class. It may be hard. But the interpreter may be your child's only way of understanding what's being taught.

- **Gets along with other children well, and can make friends.**
This is important, especially if your child is one of the few deaf students in her school. If the other children are shy about talking to a deaf person, she may have to be the one to go up to them. Read our section on [making friends](http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/growingup/teen/friends.jsp) (<http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/growingup/teen/friends.jsp>).
- **Feels good about herself.**
Your child may be the only deaf child in her school. She'll probably feel different from all the other students. But if she feels good about herself, she'll see being different as a good thing, instead of a bad one.
- **Has deaf role models and friends.**
Your child can look to her friends and role models for help if she has problems at school.
- **Is willing to work hard.**
A different school may be harder than the school your child has been going to. She may have to work extra hard to keep up. Or to catch up.

Your child may do better in the mainstream if her school has:

- **Had other children with hearing loss.**
If the school has had other deaf students, the staff may know what help these students need. This can make it easier to get the same kind of help for your child.
- **People who can help your child if her hearing aid, cochlear implant or FM system stops working.**
If your child's hearing aid stops working all of a sudden, what will she do? Getting sent to the library for the rest of the day would be a waste of time. If her school has someone on staff to help her, she can keep going to class.
- **A teacher in your child's grade who has had deaf students in his class before.**
A teacher who has taught deaf students before would be a big help. He may know what kind of extra help deaf students need. So he may be more prepared to help your child.
- **A psychologist or social worker that has worked with children with hearing loss before.**
Many schools may not have these kinds of people on staff. But having one can help a lot when your child is having trouble in school.
- **An IEP team that has worked with other children with hearing loss.**
This IEP team would have a better idea of what kinds of help students with hearing loss need. And how to set goals for these children.
- **Classrooms that don't echo a lot.**
Noisy classrooms can be a big distraction. Especially to someone using hearing aids. Putting down carpet and padding the bottoms of chair legs and desk can make a room quieter.
- **School interpreters** (<http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/learning/help/interpreters/>)
If the school already knows of trained interpreters who can work with your child, it should be easier for your child to get an interpreter.

Your child may do better in the mainstream if you and your family:

- **Can talk or sign with your child well enough to help her through getting used to a new school.**

Going to a new school can be lonely at first. Your child will probably need your help in getting through it. Make sure you're there for her.

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You can find this page online at:

<http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/learning/choices/mainstream/checklist.jsp>