

# Fast Facts

# IEP Special Factors:

**Considerations for Students Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing**

***(September 3, 2009)***

Students who are deaf and hard of hearing must have complete access to all communication in their educational environments to meet the same learning standards as their hearing peers. Creating full and effective communication access for all students permits them continuous access to information, opportunities for incidental learning and for learning through peer interaction. The provision of good language models is critical.

Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams must address the following for a child who is deaf or hard of hearing:

* The child’s language and communication needs;
* Opportunities for direct communication with peers and professional personnel in the child’s language and communication mode;
* Academic level; and
* Full range of needs including opportunities for direct instruction in the child’s language and communication mode.

Special education and related services must be included in the child's IEP. The IEP team’s decision should always be in the context of providing a learning environment that meets the communication and educational needs of a child who is deaf or hard of hearing.

Effective communication in a language-rich environment provides opportunities for continuous language competency development. It can also address the child’s cognitive level and needed accommodations or modifications.

In determining appropriate special education, related services and other needed experiences, the IEP team should develop opportunities that address:

* The child’s academic performance, communication mode, language abilities and social/emotional development needs;
* Necessary accommodations, modifications, and needed technology;
* The level of communication access in the classroom, home, and overall school environment;
* Qualifications and communicative competencies of personnel that match the child’s primary mode of communication;
* Opportunities for interaction with a sufficient number of age-appropriate peers who are deaf or hard of hearing and who communicate the same way as the child; and
* Physical characteristics of the setting (visual, acoustics).

### For more information:

Virginia Department of Education Web site: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov> or contact Division of Instructional Support and Related Services at 804-225-2932, 1-800-422-2083, Text users dial 711 (Virginia Relay)

See *Guidelines for Working with Students Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing in Virginia Public Schools*, and in particular, Appendix F, Virginia Communication Plan.