

# Itinerant Teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing

## JOB DESCRIPTION

**Job Summary:** The itinerant teacher is a certified teacher of the deaf/hard of hearing provides expertise to school teams and work with students with hearing loss to provide appropriate educational services. The teacher of the deaf/hard of hearing is responsible for student assessment as part of the team eligibility determination to determine the impact of the hearing loss and areas of potential need for intervention. This professional is involved in writing IEP goals and IEP/504 Plan accommodations, monitoring use of communication access technology/services, providing direct service 1:1, in small groups, as push-in classroom services, and consultation with school staff, per the IEP, to support educational attainment and successful communication for students who are deaf and hard of hearing. Itinerant teachers of the deaf/hard of hearing travel to schools to serve the needs of students with hearing loss.

**Job Location:** The job of the itinerant teacher of the deaf/hard of hearing requires travel between a number of schools, based on the location of students with hearing loss on their caseload. Some services may also be provided via internet-based communication platforms.

### **Responsibilities**

#### **EARLY INTERVENTION**

Approximately 40% of itinerant teachers of the deaf/hard of hearing provide support services to families of infants and toddlers who are deaf or hard of hearing.

#### **Eligibility Determination Responsibilities include:**

- Upon the initial referral, collect background information, medical history, audiological history, family history (including hearing loss etiology or hearing related syndromes), hearing amplification history/current amplification information, communication mode and language development skills.
- Collaborate with assessment teams to determine the most appropriate assessments to administer, which have been vetted for use with children with hearing loss and make recommendations for appropriate and necessary accommodations for the assessment session.
- Evaluate the child's developmental abilities in language, auditory skills, compensatory strategies, accessing auditory information across settings, communication skills, and social language.
- Interpret assessment results and facilitate discussions about how the child's type and severity of hearing loss can impact the student's ability for language acquisition, social and emotional development, literacy skill development, and make recommendations for modifications and accommodations that can help mitigate barriers.
- Assist the IFSP team with determining service delivery, setting educational goals, educating teams and families about education placement options that will support the child's needs and provide an overview of implications and barriers for communication and language.

#### **Early Intervention Supports and Services Responsibilities include:**

- Provide families with information about hearing loss, communication options, implications of hearing loss on language, literacy and social development and educate them on the various roles of professionals (educational audiologist, clinical audiologist, SLP, TODHH, interpreters etc)
- Inform families of the benefits of continuous amplification for language development. Support use of hearing devices all waking hours using a variety of strategies and retention accessories.

Job Description created by Supporting Success for Children with Hearing Loss. Duties are based on survey responses by 317 itinerant teachers of the deaf/hard of hearing. Duties listed were identified by 75% or more of survey respondents. 2022

- Coach parents on how to set up and provide a language-rich home environment which facilitates communication, model strategies with the child and encourage the parent to participate and integrate spoken and/or manual/signed communication and listening development strategies that align with their preference for communication mode.
- Regularly monitor child's acquisition of language (spoken and/or sign) relative to hearing age and typical language development expectations.

## **PRESCHOOL**

**Preschool Responsibilities Include** transition from early intervention, eligibility determination, educational planning, and service provision.

- Collaborate in the development of data-based IEPs to include measurable instructional goals/objectives based on the needs identified in the evaluation results as well as modify goals and objectives based on gathered progress data.
- Collaborate with preschool staff and help facilitate instruction that meets the child's unique communication needs, to help promote language and preliteracy skill building.
- Modify classroom environment to meet the physical, cognitive, cultural, and communication needs (e.g. teaching style, acoustic environment, availability of support services, use of appropriate technology).
- Provide direct instruction in language development to include vocabulary development, phonics acquisition, auditory skill development, use and care of amplification equipment, self-advocacy skills and communication repair strategies.
- Support socio-emotional development of acceptance of hearing loss and equipment within academic settings. Assist teachers, students, and parents in explaining hearing loss and equipment to child's classmates and peers to promote positive interactions related to the student's hearing and equipment.
- Assist the student in identifying and responding to difficult listening situations and missed communication opportunities.
- Teach or further develop ASL skills when identified by a student's IEP.

## **SCHOOL-AGE (kindergarten – high school)**

**Eligibility Determination Responsibilities include:**

- Working with school assessment teams to explain implications of hearing loss on the student's ability for language acquisition and the impact on literacy, communication, access to incidental language and how this impacts assessment; make recommendations for appropriate assessments; modifications for administering the assessment; assist teams in reporting results of assessment in light of the impact of hearing loss.
- Collecting information from all team members, including the student (in their primary language and mode of communication) and administering appropriate assessments that will help gauge the student's functional and academic abilities in critical listening situations, phonological awareness, auditory skill development, compensatory skills, social skill development, literacy, expressive and receptive vocabulary, communication, and language.
- Conducting classroom observations to determine if the student with hearing loss has access to communication, in their primary mode and language, determine most appropriate seating for the child according to acoustical parameters and make recommendations for accommodations and modifications that ensure access.
- Assisting teams in working with the educational interpreter for assessment purposes, class arrangement, and roles and responsibilities of the interpreter.

- Assisting in/or facilitating development of eligibility reports that include information on the impact of the student's hearing loss across environments, the student's need for specially designed instruction, related services, and communication related needs for access, explain how the student's etiology, onset, type, and degree of hearing loss may impact their educational placement in the LRE, and consideration of the student's full range of needs in determining eligibility.
- Assisting in determining if the student's needs can be best met in Special Education under IDEA regulations, or under the provisions of a 504 plan under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.
- Once the team has decided eligibility, assisting in drafting the IEP/Communication Plan/504 plan, including comprehensive information from the team, creating goals and recommendations for service delivery, accommodations, modifications, primary and secondary disabilities, and case manager determination.
- Explaining educational placement options that include cultural identity, linguistic, academic, social-emotional abilities, and communication effectiveness.

### **Management of Hearing Assistance Technology Responsibilities include:**

Note: some itinerant teachers of the deaf hard of hearing work with educational audiologists who perform or share in hearing assistance technology responsibilities.

- Interpreting audiological information from audiologists, physicians, and school nurses.
- Inservicing classroom teachers, school nurses, and necessary school staff, on using hearing assistance technology. (e.g., daily monitoring of personal and classroom amplification, use of the Ling Sound Listening Check, documenting results daily, troubleshooting and changing batteries on personal devices.)
- Collaborating with classroom teachers and school staff about how to appropriately address a student's hearing loss, communication needs, and use of amplification to other students in the classroom while being sensitive to the student's emotional needs and feelings about their hearing loss.
- Providing additional resources to school staff about troubleshooting devices and maximizing the benefit of hearing assistance technology, how to use closed captioning on various media platforms, how to provide online access in virtual settings, and how to integrate hearing assistance technology in a variety of settings, by demonstrating techniques (face-to-face or video), and providing tips, both in person and via email/text message.
- Collaborating with educational and/or private audiologists to support Hearing Assistive Technology recommendations, equipment repairs, replacements, and purchases that will provide the student with auditory access in the school setting.
- Setting up systems for the student to successfully transfer hearing assistance technology transmitters to different classrooms when students change classrooms or go to their Special subjects (art, music, PE etc.)
- Utilizing manufacturer sites for user manuals, troubleshooting, and training videos to perform basic hearing assistance technology checks and respond to student/teacher reports of amplification malfunction to determine if service or repair needs to be provided.

### **Kindergarten – High School Services and Support Responsibilities include:**

- Assisting general education teachers in meeting the needs of the student with hearing loss, by demonstrating, explaining, modifying, and delivering instruction that is unique to the student with hearing loss, and assisting with evidence-based strategies for instructing students with hearing loss.
- Providing age/grade appropriate, evidence-based instruction to students with hearing loss, regarding their hearing loss, compensatory strategies, self-advocacy skills, and hearing assistive technology, including maintenance and troubleshooting.
- Preview, review, pre-teach, re-teach information and concepts that the student with hearing loss to increase comprehension in general curriculum (figurative language, vocabulary expansion etc.) where incidental learning is impacted by hearing loss and group learning conditions.

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- Supporting the student with hearing loss in use of age-appropriate ways to communicate their hearing loss needs to peers and adults. To include teaching communication repair strategies for difficult listening situations and communication breakdowns.
- Supporting language, literacy, and auditory skill development of hard of hearing learners, by providing intensive, targeted instruction and implementing appropriate strategies to address potential gaps in development.
- If sign language is the student's primary mode of communication, either receptively, expressively, or both, then acting as liaison with Educational Interpreters, speech language therapists, regular educators and the student, to be sure that communication is facilitated appropriately. If necessary, teach student ASL vocabulary, and support various features of signed communication needs. Use visual means to support literacy development as needed.
- Using a variety of techniques, assist the student with hearing loss to develop age-appropriate self-esteem, self-identity, and self-advocacy skills that will best support the student's social and emotional needs. To include facilitating opportunities for the students and families to be connected to other students who have hearing loss.
- Working with the student to inservice classroom teachers, school nurses, appropriate staff and/or guidance, about required daily monitoring of amplification, implications of student's hearing loss in the educational setting, IEP accommodations and how the teacher can best facilitate access for instruction and participation in the classroom.
- Periodically monitoring/observing student's access to instruction, grades, social and adaptive behaviors, classroom advocacy skills, hearing assistance technology, and IEP goal attainment related to information in regular education. Adjust instruction, accommodations and modifications as necessary.
- Collaborating with related service providers and support seamless transition of skills across disciplines. Acting as liaison for collaboration among students, teachers, parents, administrators, and related service providers to address ongoing student needs and to support incorporation of skills such as self-advocacy, coping strategies, listening skills, problem solving, use of FM system, etc.
- Collaborating with assessment coordinators to provide appropriate accommodations for testing.

#### **Transition Services and Supports for Secondary Students Responsibilities Include:**

- Providing secondary transition services to students with hearing loss that are focused on post-secondary goals.
- Helping the student with hearing loss identify appropriate accommodations for post-secondary goals, in employment, independent living and education/training that will ensure access to communication in a variety of settings.
- Encouraging independence by transferring responsibilities for hearing aid maintenance, troubleshooting equipment, advocating for classroom accommodations and modifications, interaction with staff and peers regarding communication needs, inservicing others regarding hearing needs, and creating and leading IEP/504 plan meetings.
- Assisting the student with hearing loss in developing interest profiles, career exploration and career development through activities that enhance their employability.
- Teaching the student with hearing loss how to access community supports, how to request services for adults with hearing loss both in post-secondary educational placements and in the community, and how to obtain appropriate documents that are necessary for disability services.

#### **Providing Consultation Support Only Responsibilities Include:**

- Preparing/attending annual review meetings, reevaluation meetings, progress review meetings, team meetings, and follow up on medical and/or audiological reports (changing or progressive hearing loss, surgeries, etc. increase consult).

- Inservicing school staff and peers (as appropriate) about the impact of the student’s hearing loss across environments, academic and functional needs of the student, communication effectiveness, access to communication, and appropriate techniques to use while communicating with the student with hearing loss.
- Distributing, set up, and monitoring of hearing assistive technology.
- Assisting general education teachers with appropriate evidence-based teaching strategies specifically for students with hearing loss and support the use of accommodations and modifications in the classroom to ensure access.
- Periodically performing classroom observations and provide recommendations for classroom set up according to acoustical needs of the student.
- Serving as a liaison for continuous collaboration with classroom teacher(s), team members, parents, and administrators, regarding the student’s academic and functional progress, academic support needs, hearing assistance technology effectiveness, classroom accommodations, state testing accommodations, and modifications in the general education setting and other hearing loss related supports necessary for the student.

**Services and Supports for Students with Hearing Loss and Additional Disabilities Responsibilities Include:**

- Educating school staff about implications of hearing loss across environments and the use of hearing assistance technology to enhance auditory access in the school setting.
- Supporting special education teachers, general education teachers and related service providers by addressing the student’s needs related to their hearing loss and creating strategies that are appropriate to the student’s unique needs.
- Collaborating with school teams to identify and support academic and functional needs for the student with hearing loss and additional disabilities, by providing evidence-based strategies and techniques to maximize communication access, language acquisition, auditory skill development, self-advocacy skill development and use of compensatory skills.
- Providing families and school staff with resources and strategies for working with their student with hearing loss.

**Qualifications and Skills**

The teacher of the deaf/hard of hearing must have the educational qualifications and skills necessary to perform the job duties listed above. [Specify certifications required locally to be considered a highly qualified provider in the area of deaf/hard of hearing teaching] Excellent communication skills and the ability to successfully collaborate are necessary. Experience in the deaf education field is preferred.

**Salary and Benefits**

[Specify local salary and benefits options]