

# Safety Tips for Children with Hearing Differences

Children who are deaf or hard of hearing might not notice sounds that help keep them safe. With some planning and awareness, you can help them feel confident, secure, and included. Here are a few tips to keep in mind as you think ahead about their unique safety needs.



## Fire Safety

Use items like flashing fire/carbon monoxide alarms, bedshaker and/or flashing lights in the room to help the child know that there is an emergency happening. Also, tell your local fire department that a child lives in your home that is deaf/hard of hearing in case of emergencies. Have a bag ready with extra batteries and hearing devices.



## Community Safety

Consider requesting a deaf child area sign for your neighborhood (contact your city officials) and making sure there is a safe adult your child can go to in case of an emergency and you are not home. When your child is old enough to be alone, make sure they have access to Smart 911 so they can text 911 if needed.



## Bike Safety

Make sure that your child's hearing devices fit comfortably and safely when choosing a helmet. Be aware that a helmet might limit hearing so consider adding a removeable mirror on the handlebars for them to look behind them while riding and using a remote mic so they can still hear you from a short distance.



## Weather Safety

Have a weather alarm at home that flashes and makes noise. You can connect some to bed shaker alarms as well to alert your child while sleeping. Make sure to have a grab bag for emergencies ready with extra batteries and chargers for hearing technology and a flashlight to allow clear communication.



## Vehicle Safety

Help children be aware of parking lots and streets so that they don't run in front of cars they may not be able to hear. In your own car, having an extra rear view mirror attachment to see your child while driving and still be able to communicate can be helpful.



## Swimming Safety

If lifeguards are available, let them know that your child has a hearing difference and how to get their attention if needed. Consider visuals like different colored flags to alert them if they need to get out of the water or take a break.



# Safety Tips for Children with Hearing Differences

Keep this checklist in a place that is visible in the home, like on the fridge or by the door, so all caregivers know what to do. Most importantly, make sure they know how your child communicates!

## ✓ **Checklist for Caring for a Child Who Is Deaf or Hard of Hearing**

- ☐ **Hearing Device Essentials Before Leaving the House:** – Pack extra batteries or chargers for hearing devices and bring any device-retention items the child uses (headbands, ear gear, clips, etc.). Include a power bank in case the power goes out. Make sure all device parts are present and properly attached.
- ☐ **Know How the Hearing Device Should Look When Working Properly:** – Check for the correct lights or indicators that show the device is on. Know what the lights or signals look like when the device is not working. Confirm devices are turned on before activities. Know whether devices should stay on or be removed for car rides, naps, or physical play. Make sure they know how to use remote mics or other devices, if necessary.
- ☐ **Emergency Preparedness:** – Have a written plan for what to do in an emergency and keep a list of emergency contacts in an easy-to-find location. Make note of special considerations: the child may not hear fire alarms, tornado sirens, or other warning sounds unless they flash or vibrate. Show the caregiver where visual/vibrating alert systems are located (if available).
- ☐ **Getting the Child's Attention:** – Use gentle waving, tapping on the shoulder or flicking the lights. Approach the child from the front when possible.
- ☐ **Communication Support:** – If the child uses sign language and the caregiver does not, provide visual schedules, picture cards, or simple communication boards. Use captioning on the TV or devices when watching movies or shows.
- ☐ **Water and Outdoor Safety:** – Know whether hearing devices should be removed before swimming or water play. Use any special waterproof covers if the child has them. Dry devices thoroughly after water exposure. Have a plan for communication while the child is in the water.
- ☐ **Safety Skills for Older Children:** – Make sure the child knows the caregiver's name (not just "mom" or "dad"), their home address and a phone number in case they get separated. Consider having them keep an ID card with this information on them.
- ☐ **Familiar Faces:** – Keeping a small picture book with photos and names of family members, friends, and common caregivers is helpful for the child to easily identify people.
- ☐ **Preparing for Activities:** – Let the child know ahead of time where they are going and what they will be doing. Avoid explaining things "in the moment," since background noise or distraction may make hearing more difficult. Previewing plans helps the child stay calm and feel secure.