

Deaf/Hard of Hearing Program Description

Who is a Deaf/Hard of Hearing Cluster Site student?

A student attending the deaf/hard of hearing cluster program requires a Total Communication approach to learning and socialization as well as an intensity (*time-in-service*) of support from a teacher of the deaf/hard of hearing that goes above and beyond what can reasonably be accommodated by an itinerant Deaf/Hard of Hearing teacher and/or interpreter (*typically greater than 90 minutes of deaf/hard of hearing services per week*). Total Communication involves the use of both oral and manual approaches. This involves the use of speech, hearing, lip-reading, sign language and finger spelling. The program is language-based and focuses on communication and socialization. Deaf/hard of hearing would be the primary exceptionality of a student attending the cluster program.

Characteristics of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing Cluster program:

- Provides a language-enriched environment.
- Provides instruction and support for the student's primary mode of communication.
- Provides opportunities to be with other students who are deaf/hard of hearing and have similar communication and/or socialization needs.
- Addresses the cultural aspects of being Deaf/Hard of Hearing.

Training and educational technologies employed by staff in this program:

- Has licensed teachers for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing.
- Has certified sign language interpreters.
- Staff are trained in the use of visual and auditory supports (*closed captioning, assistive listening devices*)

Questions to ask when considering a student for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing Cluster program:

- Has a teacher for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing been consulted?
- Is the student's primary disability something other than hearing impairment?
- Does the student require intense teacher of the deaf/hard of hearing instructional support to meet academic, communication or socialization needs?
- Does the student require a Total Communication approach to learning and socialization?
- Does the student require deaf/hard of hearing peer interaction to help meet his/her communication and/or socialization needs?
- Can the student be served through IR with itinerant (no more than 90 minutes per week) support from a teacher of the deaf/hard of hearing?