

Effective Communication

When Teaching the

Deaf to Drive

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Teaching the Deaf To Drive

The success of providing effective communications to a person with hearing loss in the classroom and the vehicle is determined by focusing on three main areas: the environment, the student and the parents. The following is a guide to assist you in teaching the deaf in the classroom and vehicle.

The Classroom

The Environment: The deaf student in the classroom will be relying on their residual hearing, speech reading (lip reading), your lesson preparations, and your visual and writing cues to understand the lesson that day.

Residual Hearing: The student that relies on residual hearing will find it very difficult if the room has a lot of surface areas that reflect sound. Reduce the sound by putting fabric on the walls and carpet on the floor. The use of an auxiliary audio enhancement device can also be used.

Speech Reading: In order for a deaf student to effectively follow the lesson you must be aware of the student's position in the classroom. Seat the deaf student in a location where they can clearly see you. There are several adjustments you must make to ensure effective communication: stay away from windows, never speak while turned away from the students, such as while writing on the board, and keep your hands away from your face. These adjustments may seem minor but are important to the student with hearing loss. Following these simple instructions will increase your communication.

Lesson Preparations: It is also important to provide the deaf student an outline prior to each class. An outline will make it easier for the student to follow the lesson and the student will become familiar with any new terms that may be taught prior to class. Write a brief outline containing the major concepts on the board at the beginning of class for the deaf student to follow as you move from one topic to the other. These visual cues will assist the deaf student and will aid in lesson comprehension. If possible avoid discussion groups, as it is difficult for most deaf students to follow and participate, and therefore should be avoided if possible.

The Student: To provide effective communication to a deaf student in the classroom, it will be important to have a pre-enrollment interview with the parents to find out in details the abilities and limitation of the students enrolling in the program. The instructor must also assess and understand the student's abilities. This can be done with the aid of the parents during the pre-enrollment interview and having the instructor test and observe the deaf student in the classroom.

The Assessment: The assessment of the deaf student should be done before they enter the classroom. Some of the questions that should be asked during the assessment are: does the student speech read? Sign? Have they been mainstreamed? Are they profoundly deaf or do they have some residual hearing? If they do have some residual hearing, ask if they have any devices they can use to assist them in hearing during the lessons.

Classroom Involvement: A deaf student will experience "classroom fatigue" faster than the hearing student since the deaf student has to work to follow the lesson. To reduce classroom fatigue it is important to use workbooks and take breaks. It's also important to remember that a deaf student may be self-conscious; therefore, it is important not to draw attention to their disability, such as making the deaf student read out loud or using the deaf student's hearing impairment as a way to keep the class quiet. Be aware that a deaf student may have mastered the art of looking like they understand what you're telling them but in reality they are confused, lost and need further instruction. It is important to provide worksheets and a test at the end of each lesson to make sure you have been effective in your communication.

The Parents: Because driving lessons require skill, it is imperative that the parents are involved. Use the parents as a resource for accessing what the deaf student will need prior to class. Regular contact should be made throughout the drivers training course to gain feedback as to how the student is progressing and if the deaf student is comfortable in the classroom. Provide the parents with resources such as articles, handouts, and videos for their review with the student to provide any necessary clarification of the lesson.

The Vehicle

The uniqueness of the vehicle environment presents a few added issues that need to address to ensure effective communication is being provided to the student. It is essential to prepare prior to going on the road. Instruction in the vehicle will incorporate all the concepts previously discussed, plus the use of a note pad and the set of hand control signals included with this handout.

The Environment: Like the classroom, the vehicle should be free from noise. This will be important if the deaf student is relying on residual hearing to follow your directions. Rolling up the windows and turning off the radio are a few simple things you can do to cut down on unnecessary noise.

Lesson Preparation: A note pad, pen, and a predetermined route should be organized prior to each lesson in the vehicle. Before the start of each road lesson, the instructor should show the student the hand signals the instructor will be using throughout the lesson indicating increase or decrease speed, right turn or left turn, or the sign that the student is doing a good job. In addition to the hand signs, the deaf student should understand that they should proceed straight at intersections and cross streets unless instructed differently. Establishing the communication tools from the beginning of the lesson will lead to effective communication.

The Student: Again, to provide effective communication to a deaf student in the vehicle, the instructor must assess and understand the student's abilities. This can be done with the aid of the parents, testing and observing the deaf student in the vehicle.

The Assessment: In addition to the questions the instructor asked to determine the needs of the student in the classroom, it will be important to find out in detail if the student has any limitations that would affect their ability to drive a vehicle.

The Hand Signals: (See attached sheets)

The Parents: Because driving lessons require skill, it is imperative that you develop an easy program the parents can follow at home with their own vehicle. Regular contact should be made throughout the drivers training course to gain feedback as to how the student is progressing with their driving skills and if there is a need for additional help. Provide the parents with tips as to where and when they should practice in the vehicle.

Driver education offers us a unique environment to teach skills that will be utilize by the student for the rest of their lives. Using these tips will not only help foster effective communication in the classroom and on-the-road, but will be a blue print for the parent and the student to safely continue their driving skill development.

The ADA: Questions and Answers

Public Accommodations

Q. What are public accommodations?

A. A public accommodation is a private entity that owns, operates, leases, or leases to, a place of public accommodation. Places of public accommodation include a wide range of entities, such as restaurants, hotels, theaters, doctors' offices, pharmacies, retail stores, museums, libraries, parks, private schools, and day care centers. Private clubs and religious organizations are exempt from the ADA's title III requirements for public accommodations.

Q. Will the ADA have any effect on the eligibility criteria used by public accommodations to determine who may receive services?

A. Yes. If a criterion screens out or tends to screen out individuals with disabilities, it may only be used if necessary for the provision of the services. For instance, it would be a violation for a retail store to have a rule excluding all deaf persons from entering the premises, or for a movie theater to exclude all individuals with cerebral palsy. More subtle forms of discrimination are also prohibited. For example, requiring presentation of a driver's license as the sole acceptable means of identification for purposes of paying by check could constitute discrimination against individuals with vision impairments. This would be true if such individuals are ineligible to receive licenses and the use of an alternative means of identification is feasible.

Q. Does the ADA allow public accommodations to take safety factors into consideration in providing services to individuals with disabilities?

A. The ADA expressly provides that a public accommodation may exclude an individual, if that individual poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others that cannot be mitigated by appropriate modifications in the public accommodation's policies or procedures, or by the provision of auxiliary aids. A public accommodation will be permitted to establish objective safety criteria for the operation of its business; however, any safety standard must be based on objective requirements rather than stereotypes or generalizations about the ability of persons with disabilities to participate in an activity.

Q. Are there any limits on the kinds of modifications in policies, practices, and procedures required by the ADA?

A. Yes. The ADA does not require modifications that would fundamentally alter the nature of the services provided by the public accommodation. For example, it would not be discriminatory for a physician specialist who treats only burn patients to refer a deaf individual to another physician for treatment of a broken limb or respiratory ailment. To require a physician to accept patients outside of his or her specialty would fundamentally alter the nature of the medical practice.

Q. What kinds of auxiliary aids and services are required by the ADA to ensure effective communication with individuals with hearing or vision impairments?

A. Appropriate auxiliary aids and services may include services and devices such as qualified interpreters, assistive listening devices, notetakers, and written materials for individuals with hearing impairments; and qualified readers, taped texts, and brailled or large print materials for individuals with vision impairments.

Q. Are there any limitations on the ADA's auxiliary aids requirements?

A. Yes. The ADA does not require the provision of any auxiliary aid that would result in an undue burden or in a fundamental alteration in the nature of the goods or services provided by a public accommodation. However, the public accommodation is not relieved from the duty to furnish an alternative auxiliary aid, if available, that would not result in a fundamental alteration or undue burden. Both of these limitations are derived from existing regulations and caselaw under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and are to be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Q. Will a bookstore be required to maintain a sign language interpreter on its staff in order to communicate with deaf customers?

A. No, not if employees communicate by pen and notepad when necessary. .

Q. Does the ADA permit an individual with a disability to sue a business when that individual believes that discrimination is about to occur, or must the individual wait for the discrimination to occur?

A. The ADA public accommodations provisions permit an individual to allege discrimination based on a reasonable belief that discrimination is about to occur. This provision allows a person who uses a wheelchair to challenge the planned construction of a new place of public accommodation, such as a shopping mall, that would not be accessible to individuals who use wheelchairs. The resolution of such challenges prior to the construction of an inaccessible facility would enable any necessary remedial measures to be incorporated in the building at the planning stage, when such changes would be relatively inexpensive.

Q. When are the public accommodations provisions effective?

A. In general, they became effective on January 26, 1992.

Q. How will the public accommodations provisions be enforced?

A. Private individuals may bring lawsuits in which they can obtain court orders to stop discrimination. Individuals may also file complaints with the Attorney General, who is authorized to bring lawsuits in cases of general public importance or where a "pattern or practice" of discrimination is alleged. In these cases, the Attorney General may seek monetary damages and civil penalties. Civil penalties may not exceed \$50,000 for a first violation or \$100,000 for any subsequent violation.

Resources

Deaf Organizations

Deaf WWW: Articles on a variety of deaf issues and useful links on many subject areas.

Web: www.deafwww.com

Registry of Interpreters for the deaf worldwide:

Web: www.rid.org

Address: 333 Commerce Street, Alexandria, VA 22314

Phone 703-838-0030 Voices, 703-838-0459 TTY

National Association of the Deaf: Information on Deaf programs, A.S.L, deaf culture and Community.

Web: www.nad.org

Address: 814 Thayer Ave. Silver Springs, MD 20910

Phone: 301-587-1788 Voices, 301-587-1789 TTY

Assistive Driving Equipment

Audio Enhancement: AT-37 Wireless Assistive listening Systems

Address: Audio Enhancement

12613 South Redwood Rd. Riverton, UT 84065

Phone: 1-800-383-9362

Blinker Buddy: Turn Signal reminder with visual and audible notification.

Address: ADCO Hearing Products, Inc.

5661 South Curtice Street

Littleton, CO 80120

Web: www.adcohearing.com

Phone: 1-800-726-0851

Emergency Response System: Early detection of emergency vehicle

Address: ADCO Hearing Products, Inc.

5661 South Curtice Street

Littleton, CO 80120

Web: www.adcohearing.com

Phone: 1-800-726-0851

Government

Americans with Disabilities Act Information line
Phone: 1-800-514-0301, 1-800-514-0383 (TDD)

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (ADA)
Web: www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/aandaeng.htm

U.S. Department of Education FREE Captioned films program.
Web: www.cfv.org

Services

Video Captioning
Ccmaker-G&G Video
1030 Congress St.
Portland, Me 04102

Web: www.ccmaker.com
Phone: 1-800-527-0551 Voice, 207-733-0316 TTY