

Explanation of audiological terms and procedures

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TYPES OF HEARING LOSS

- a) **Conductive hearing loss** occurs in either the outer or middle ear. It may be for example wax blocking the ear canal, glue ear, malformation of the middle ear bones, or a perforated ear drum. It is usually treatable by medication or surgery. Conductive loss may be mild, moderate and fluctuating or long term. Amplifying sounds and paying attention to appropriate position and seating in a classroom can overcome many potential difficulties that children with a conductive loss may experience.
- b) **Sensori-neural hearing loss** occurs in and beyond the inner ear. This is permanent and not usually treatable. Many people with this hearing loss in both ears wear hearing aids. This type of hearing loss will affect their perception of some or all of the frequencies of speech. A sensori-neural hearing loss may be mild, moderate, severe or profound.
- c) **Mixed hearing loss** is a sensori-neural hearing loss with an additional conductive overlay.
- d) **Non-organic hearing loss** (or functional hearing loss) is taken to mean a hearing difficulty which cannot be accounted for by an organic cause.
- e) **Auditory neuropathy** (and auditory dys-synchrony) is a hearing disorder where sound is transmitted normally through the middle and inner ear but the signal from the inner ear to the brain is impaired. The signal may be distorted or disorganised.

HEARING LOSS TERMS

Bilateral:	both ears have a hearing loss.
Unilateral:	one ear has a hearing loss, the other ear has hearing within normal limits.
Asymmetrical:	both ears have a hearing loss but one ear has a loss that is significantly different from the other. (This difference must be specified.)
High frequency:	the hearing loss at high frequency is significantly worse than that at low frequency.
Low frequency:	the hearing loss at low frequency is significantly worse than that at high frequency.
Progressive:	hearing loss becomes significantly and permanently greater over a period of time. Remember clinical variation can be up to 5dBHL for air conduction.
Fluctuating:	the degree of hearing loss varies significantly over relatively short periods of time eg glue ear.
Sudden:	hearing loss is of sudden onset eg meningitis.
Traumatic:	hearing loss is due to a physical trauma eg head injury, barotrauma (diving, flying).