

Accommodating learners with barriers to learning in the Grade R classroom

Auditory impairment (the child cannot hear properly):

- Hearing loss can be mild or serious. Deafness can occur in one or both ears.
- Deafness (from birth): The learner was born deaf or became deaf before acquiring (learning) language.
- Deafness (later in life): The learner became deaf after acquiring (learning) language.

Some ideas to support learners who find it difficult to hear properly:

- Make sure the learner has an assistive listening device such as a hearing aid.
- If possible, try to acquire an FM listening system (this lets the teacher talk into a handheld microphone, which transmits the sound of the teacher's voice directly to the deaf or hard-of-hearing learner's hearing aid).
- If possible, enlist in the help of a South African Sign Language (SASL) teacher.

Oral impairment (the child cannot speak properly):

- **Articulation (pronunciation of words):**
The learner mispronounces words. This could be due to an oral motor skill or oral defect, or as the result of not being able to hear properly.
- **Fluency (stammering and stuttering):**
The learner either repeats whole words at the beginning of a phrase or when thinking of how to finish a sentence; or the learner repeats parts of a word and struggles to finish words.
- **Oral motor skills:** The learner has difficulty using the lips, tongue and jaw to produce speech sounds. The learner may also struggle to swallow and eat.

Some ideas to support learners who find it difficult to speak clearly:

- Adjust the speed at which you speak.
- Use shorter sentences.
- Provide opportunities for visual learning – for example, allow learners to respond visually (with drawings and colour at this age) rather than verbally.

(b) PERCEPTUAL BARRIERS (the child struggles to use one or more of his/her senses to make meaning of something):

These barriers usually accompany a visual or auditory barrier (see above). The learner cannot recognise, discriminate or interpret stimuli using his or her senses.

Some ideas to support learners with perceptual barriers:

- The Grade R classroom naturally supports learners with these barriers – we encourage learners to use their senses, particularly those of sight, sound and touch. Use the activities in the Lesson Plan Book to help learners overcome their perceptual barriers to learning. Make sure that you create a sensory classroom that includes water, sand and imaginary experiences.