



### IDEA: Categories of Disabilities -- Deafness

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) defines **Deafness** as:

a hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

#### What is Deafness?

Deafness is the inability to comprehend verbal language due to an inability to hear. The severity of a hearing impairment is ranked according to the additional intensity above a nominal threshold that a sound must be before being detected by an individual; it is measured in decibels of hearing loss; or dB HL. Typically hearing loss above 90 decibels is considered deafness. Hearing impairment may be ranked as the following:

- mild: between 20-40 dB HL
- moderate: between 41-54 dB HL
- moderately severe: between 55-70 dB HL
- severe: between 71-90 dB HL
- profound: 91 dB HL
- totally deaf: no hearing at all

#### What are the signs of Deafness?

Some signs that a child may not be hearing normally are:

- child does not respond consistently to sounds or to his or her own name;
- asks for things to be repeated or often says "huh?"
- turns the volume up loud on the TV and other devices;
- child is delayed in developing speech or has unclear speech.

*This information is not meant to diagnose any child and should not take the place of consultation with a qualified healthcare professional.*

**Where to call for a free evaluation from the state depends on your child's age:**

#### Under Three (3) Years Old

Contact SoonerStart Early Intervention Services at 405-521-3351

<http://sde.ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/2013%20Referral%20Guide%20back.pdf>

#### Three (3) Years Old and Older

Contact your local public school system.

[www.ok.gov/sde/state-school-directory](http://www.ok.gov/sde/state-school-directory)

*Even if your child is not yet old enough for kindergarten or enrolled in a public school, call your local elementary school and ask to speak with someone who can help you have your child evaluated.*


If you're not sure who to contact, call the **Oklahoma Parents Center** toll-free at 877-553-4332 and we can help you!

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Source:

*Deafness, Oklahoma State Department of Education.*

*Deafness and Hearing Loss, Parent Center Hub.*

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