

# WORLD HEARING DAY

## Hearing Protection Across the Lifespan: Children and Adolescents

Exposure to excessive noise becomes an increasing threat for school-aged children and teens. Even a small amount of untreated hearing loss can result in academic and/or social difficulties.

**Noisy Technology:** Many children cumulatively spend hours each day on tablets, smartphones, laptops, and gaming systems—often using earbuds or headphones. The combination of high volume and time spent using devices can pose a significant danger to their hearing.



**What to Do** Teach kids to keep the volume to half when using earbuds or headphones. Volume-limiting and noise-canceling headphones can help. Advise kids to take listening breaks every hour for a few minutes.

**Noisy Events, Hobbies, and Jobs:** Children and teens often spend a lot of time in loud environments, including concerts and sporting events. They may also have loud hobbies (such as playing an instrument) or loud jobs (the restaurant, event, and landscaping industries employ many teenagers).

**What to Do** Talk to kids about why protecting their hearing is important. Encourage them to wear hearing protection (which may be worth getting customized from an audiologist if they spend a lot of time in noisy places). Help them find a way to incorporate listening breaks into their routines. Talk to kids about warning signs for hearing loss such as their hearing suddenly decreasing or their ears ringing.

**Noisy Classrooms:** The World Health Organization (WHO) says that chronic noise exposure in classrooms can impede academic performance in areas such as reading ability, comprehension, short- and long-term memory, and motivation. WHO states that, on average, children who are exposed to noisy learning environments have lower assessment scores on standardized tests.

**What to Do** Talk to teachers and other school staff if this is an issue that your child mentions (educational audiologists can suggest changes to help reduce the noise). Get a hearing evaluation for your child if they are experiencing any learning difficulties that are unexpected or unexplained by another disorder or disability.

Learn more at [www.asha.org/public](http://www.asha.org/public).

