



Better Hearing & Speech Month

Tips to promote better communication in your classroom

Did you know... Teachers are at a very high risk for developing voice problems such as chronic hoarseness or vocal nodules. These issues can have a negative impact on your whole life – not just in the classroom. Taking measure now to help reduce the strain on your voice will help preserve your voice in the future.

1. Limit environmental noise where possible.

- a. **Why?** This will allow you to reduce strain on your voice from having to speak over loud noises.
- b. **How?** Shut your door to reduce hallway noise. Use materials such as rugs, curtains, and pillows to help dampen sound reverberation. Regularly review student expectations to be quiet and respectful in the hallway.

2. Use methods other than raising your voice to gain students' attention.

- a. **Why?** This will help reduce strain on your voice.
- b. **How?** Turn off the lights, clap, or use a chime/whistle/musical cue to gain attention.

3. If you have a cold or allergies that make it difficult to use your voice, rest it as much as possible.

- a. **Why?** By putting less strain on your voice, it may help you make it through the day without losing your voice completely.
- b. **How?** Drink a lot of non-caffeinated fluids. Try having students listen to a book on tape rather than read it aloud yourself. Designate a student "voice helper" for the day to repeat directions for you as needed, or write directions on the board instead of saying them aloud.

4. Give directions in small steps.

- a. **Why?** Students with language and/or attention disorders can only pay attention to so much information at one time. If there is too much information given at once, they may not remember any of it.
- b. **How?** Give one direction at a time or write the different steps on the board so students can refer to them as necessary. Ask a student what he/she is supposed to do after you have given the directions to check for comprehension.