

Managing Noise and Reverberation in the Classroom

Children who have any degree of hearing loss may have difficulty hearing important information when surrounded by other noises. These may be the busy sounds of peers talking and working, the noise of fans and air conditioners, or environmental background such as road traffic, bustling passageways or poor weather. All can mask important speech and information that needs to be heard, understood and attended to when in the classroom and playground.

Strategies to reduce reverberation

Teachers can lessen reverberation (echo) in the classroom setting by reducing the number of exposed hard surfaces, including:

- **Soft wall hangings and crafts:** these can be made by the students.
- **Carpet and/or rugs on the floor:** while it's not always possible to have fully carpeted floors, even a small carpeted area for focused group time can provide benefit.
- **Curtains, blinds or pictures on windows**
- **Nets or fabric hanging from the ceiling**

Reducing reverberation in larger rooms will require more acoustic treatment than in smaller spaces. Even reducing the reverberation in one room also has the added advantage of reducing noise transfer from that room to the adjoining one.

Strategies to reduce noise

- **Keeping windows and doors closed**
- **Use noise level charts or apps to assist children in self-regulating noise levels**
- **Place rubber stops or tennis balls on chairs to reduce classroom noise**



Kindy Inclusion Service

07 3850 2111 | hearandsay.org.au

kindyinclusion@hearandsay.com.au



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