



More Than Hearing Loss

Resources:



[Hands & Voices](#)



[Cincinnati Children's](#)



[Ebook findings](#)



[Considerations of additional disabilities](#)

What to consider when a child has additional diagnoses other than hearing loss:

- More than 40% of children who are deaf/hard of hearing (d/hh) have additional health problems or developmental delays.
- These additional diagnoses can include mental health challenges, learning disabilities, blindness, cerebral palsy and other needs.
- Additional disabilities and/or diagnoses can occur because of the same factor that caused the hearing loss (genetics, illness, etc.) or be completely unrelated to the hearing loss.
- People who are d/hh with additional diagnoses are sometimes referred to as deaf plus or deaf with disabilities.
- It can be more difficult for professionals to distinguish between hearing loss and other disabilities, which can make evaluations, intervention, and/or educational placement more challenging.
- The combination of hearing loss and other health or developmental diagnoses can make interventions for either one difficult, as each diagnosis (and each individual) brings with it its own obstacles and needs.
- It is important for people who work with a child who is deaf with disabilities to know all of the disabilities a child has, even if it may seem like it wouldn't apply to a certain professional. This way, professionals can be aware of the combination of factors that may affect the goals they are working toward. For example, it is important for a child's physical therapist to know they are d/hh so the therapist can communicate effectively; at the same time, it is important for an audiologist to know about a child's motor delays in order to provide accessibility and work with the child's unique motor abilities.
- Additional disabilities can make the listening and communication for a child who is d/hh challenging. Each family should consider all choices for communication and decide what is a good fit for their child. Sometimes a child may use different communication choices for expressive and receptive language.