



Acoustics in the home

The home could easily be described as the primary learning environment for babies and young children. It is the place in which routines are established and first social interactions occur. For these reasons, it is important to create an acoustically friendly environment for our children with hearing loss.

In an ideal world, to create such a learning environment in the home, we would have acoustically treated ceilings, double-glazed windows, wall-to-wall carpeting and a quiet air conditioning system. But in reality it is not feasible for most people to accommodate for such big and expensive structural modifications to their home. Not to worry, there are many inexpensive and easy ways to improve the acoustics in your home.

The following are examples of simple ways to achieve better acoustics:

- Use large area rugs or even a few throw rugs on tiled or hardwood floors
- Add cushions and blankets on furniture
- Install a curtain rod for hanging curtains- even when not closed the curtains will help to absorb some of the reverberation
- Use felt pads on the bottoms of chair legs and stools to avoid scraping and screeching noises when moved
- Draught stoppers help to minimise noise from adjoining rooms when doors are closed

If you are able to achieve all these minor modifications to your home, great! However, don't stop there. There are still other changes that can be made in the home that might influence the listening environment and it won't cost a thing- your own behaviour. Although on first glance some suggestions might seem simple, they often tend to be more difficult as they may involve breaking some 'bad' habits.

Here are some ways to modify your behaviour to ensure a better listening environment:

- Do a 'sound walk' through the home. Start paying attention to what makes noise and what reduces it. For example, noisy air conditioning units, fish tanks, the hum of a computer left on, etc. Be mindful of these things when communicating with your child and reduce or eliminate these noises where possible.
- Turn off the TV or radio.
- Reduce the distance to your child when speaking
- Close doors within the house to help prevent reverberation throughout the house and to prevent noise coming from other rooms
- Close windows if located near traffic or other outdoor noises.