



# **Guidelines** A Practical Guideline to Capturing and Documenting the Real-Time Consequences of Fluctuating Hearing Loss in School-Age Children

Cassandra Cowan <sup>1,\*</sup>, Kathleen Jones <sup>1</sup>, Amberley V. Ostevik <sup>1</sup>, Sara Al Souqi <sup>1</sup>, William Hodgetts <sup>1,2</sup> and Jacqueline Cummine <sup>1,3,\*</sup>

- <sup>1</sup> Communication Sciences and Disorders, Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB T6G 2R3, Canada; kgjones@ualberta.ca (K.J.); ostevik@ualberta.ca (A.V.O.); alsouqi@ualberta.ca (S.A.S.); bill.hodgetts@ualberta.ca (W.H.)
- <sup>2</sup> Institute for Reconstructive Sciences in Medicine, Covenant Health, Edmonton, AB T6G 2R3, Canada
- <sup>3</sup> Neuroscience and Mental Health Institute, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB T6G 2R3, Canada
- \* Correspondence: ccowan1@ualberta.ca (C.C.); jcummine@ualberta.ca (J.C.); Tel.: +1-780-492-0834 (J.C.)

**Abstract:** Background: Fluctuating conductive hearing loss resulting from middle ear conditions, such as otitis media, is the most common cause of hearing loss in children, with Indigenous Peoples experiencing otitis media at a rate three times higher than non-Indigenous populations. Children with chronic hearing loss face increased educational, social, and economic challenges. However, treating and documenting fluctuating hearing loss remains difficult due to its sporadic and invisible nature, frequently leading to delayed or missed identification and inconsistent management. Methods: A comprehensive literature search was completed with a librarian, but few resources were located for this condition and population. Results: This practical guideline aims to improve the documentation and subsequent management of otitis media in school-aged children, with a focus on rural and Indigenous communities in Canada, where access to healthcare professionals may be limited. Conclusions: Despite efforts to raise awareness about otitis media in rural and Indigenous communities, there are still few accessible tools for caregivers to track the severity of fluctuating hearing loss. This guideline aims to help fill this gap.

Keywords: fluctuating; conductive; pediatric hearing loss; learning; otitis media; real-time; Indigenous

#### 1. Introduction

Otitis media (OM), an inflammation and/or excess of fluid within the middle ear, is a common cause of fluctuating hearing loss (FHL) in children. Most forms of OM cause temporary conductive hearing loss, but chronic cases can result in permanent, mixed hearing loss [1]. A cross-sectional study conducted in 2020 revealed that 80% of children under the age of four were affected by otitis media, with 22.5% of these children presenting with episodic OM-related hearing loss of 25–45 dB [2–4]. Children are particularly susceptible to OM due to the functional immaturity of their immune systems and Eustachian tubes, which are shorter, more horizontal, and prone to dysfunction compared to those of adults. In addition, nasopharyngeal bacteria proliferation can contribute to incidences of OM [1]. Otitis media also disproportionately impacts Indigenous Peoples at a rate three times higher than non-Indigenous populations, exacerbating existing systemic challenges [5]. And despite efforts to raise awareness about OM rates in Indigenous communities [6–10], there is still a lack of accessible tools for primary caregivers (i.e., family, educators) to document the frequency and severity of FHL, especially in school-aged children. And yet, without systematic and accurate documentation of FHL, the full consequences on academic, socio-emotional, and physical well-being cannot be realized.



Citation: Cowan, C.; Jones, K.; Ostevik, A.V.; Al Souqi, S.; Hodgetts, W.; Cummine, J. A Practical Guideline to Capturing and Documenting the Real-Time Consequences of Fluctuating Hearing Loss in School-Age Children. *J. Otorhinolaryngol. Hear. Balance Med.* **2024**, *5*, 19. https://doi.org/10.3390/ ohbm5020019

Academic Editors: Augusto Pietro Casani and Agnieszka Szczepek

Received: 28 August 2024 Revised: 16 November 2024 Accepted: 20 November 2024 Published: 5 December 2024



**Copyright:** © 2024 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https:// creativecommons.org/licenses/by/ 4.0/).

#### 1.1. Formation of the Guideline

The idea for this guideline came as the result of several conversations among audiologists (including authors A.O., K.J., and W.H.), speech-language pathologists (including author S.S.), researchers (all authors), individuals with diagnosed/aided hearing challenges (authors C.C., K.J., J.C.), and parents with children who have hearing challenges (authors K.J., J.C.). In this last case, a colleague's child was suffering from bilateral chronic OM. Repeated testing by several of the authors confirmed that this condition was causing the child's hearing to fluctuate with a conductive component between 0 and 30 dB HL over several months. This situation was extraordinary as this child had access to audiologists, daily if needed. A referral to an otolaryngologist was made, fluctuating hearing loss was confirmed, and a pathway for treatment was recommended. However, the parent noted the need to share with the child's educators, as well as the otolaryngologist and audiologist at subsequent appointments, the unfolding nature of the FHL so that accommodations could be made in the classroom. However, a search could not locate any tools or guidelines to assist the parent or primary caregiver to track this condition at home on a consistent basis. This guideline and its included recommendations are meant to fill this gap. Several specialists (including audiologists, otolaryngologists, and persons with Indigenous lived experience) were consulted to create this document. An otolaryngologist reviewed all content related to otitis media (OM) and hearing loss classifications. Particular attention was given to the distinctions between acute and chronic OM, as these are critical for understanding the varying impacts on hearing loss in Indigenous populations. This review ensures that the guideline reflects up-to-date medical knowledge and aligns with the standard care practices for managing OM in both clinical and community settings, thereby strengthening the clinical relevance of the document, particularly in relation to Indigenous health considerations.

The result of these conversations and efforts is a guideline that examines the impact of FHL on children and provides recommendations for families and educators on how to improve the documentation of FHL secondary to OM. It also discusses initiatives that target awareness and treatment pathways, with a focus on rural and Indigenous communities in Canada where consistent access to healthcare professionals may be limited and the impacts of FHL likely widespread [11–13].

#### 1.2. Hearing Loss Consequences

### 1.2.1. Permanent Hearing Loss

The consequences and impact of permanent hearing loss on learning and memory have been extensively researched and reported [14–29]. Hearing loss has significant long-term consequences on learning, retention, speech perception, and vocabulary development, even with early and adequate treatment (e.g., amplification). Beyond these challenges, hearing loss in early childhood is also linked to decreased social skills, poorer school performance, and impaired speech and language outcomes [2,18,30–35]. While early intervention, particularly before six months of age for those with congenital losses, helps mitigate many adverse effects [2,16,26,36–38], the long-term impact and consequences on social and emotional well-being [24,39,40] and employment prospects [41] are still measurable. The ramifications of permanent hearing loss on childhood development cannot be overstated; however, the extent to which these same consequences are present in children who experience fluctuating conductive hearing loss is less established.

#### 1.2.2. Fluctuating Hearing Loss

Fluctuating hearing loss (FHL) presents a unique challenge in the assessment of its impact on learning, memory, and attention due to its sporadic onset, varying duration, and fluctuating severity. Researchers have thus far approached FHL categorically, grouping children based on the frequency of FHL episodes [40,42,43]. For example, one paper [43] classified children into four groups: normal hearing (no bouts of otitis media-related FHL), minor (fewer than four episodes per year), middle (between four and nine episodes), and

severe (more than nine episodes). They found that children who had experienced any FHL had impaired speech perception in noise, with more serious impairments in those categorized in the severe group. It is also important to note that in the aforementioned studies [40,43], all children had normal hearing thresholds during assessments. A significant gap remains in the literature regarding the impact of FHL on learning, memory, and attention during an active bout or episode of otitis media.

Additional research indicates that children with hearing loss, including FHL, may exhibit delays in language development, working memory, and other cognitive domains [44–47]. These delays can significantly affect academic performance and social interactions [48–51]. And although accurate assessment and documentation of a FHL's fluctuating nature is crucial to understanding its impact on cognitive and social development, few tools or guidelines exist to support caregivers in these efforts.

#### 1.3. Indigenous Populations

It is critical to acknowledge the increased rate of OM in Indigenous populations, who are an 'at-risk' and marginalized group [5,6,10,52]. Overcrowded living conditions, which contribute to the prevalence of OM, are more common among those who face systemic barriers [7,9,13]. Some research has investigated the potential pathways for this increased incidence ([5] for the inflammation hypothesis; [5] for adverse factors in rural and remote communities; [12,13] for the impact of poverty on OM in a Canadian context). Other studies have focused on pathways for increased awareness and subsequent treatment for susceptible Indigenous peoples [6,7,9,11,53]. In line with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action, additional considerations must be taken into account if research is conducted within Indigenous communities. Relationships must be built on mutual trust and respect to ensure that knowledge acquisition is not invasive and unnecessary for the communities. The goal is for research to be conducted with, not on, Indigenous peoples [54–57]. This could be accomplished by having Indigenous healthcare workers serve as a conduit between Indigenous families and researchers [5].

And while the acute consequences of FHL on day-to-day functioning are not fully understood, its effects may contribute to several long-term outcomes. It is also reasonable to postulate that FHL and its impacts are experienced to a greater degree in vulnerable and/or isolated populations with higher rates of OM [6,7,9,10,33]. Therefore, methodical and valid documentation of repeated FHL episodes in school-aged children, who rely on listening and talking as their primary modes of educational instruction in formal academic settings [54], is needed to mitigate the impact of this sporadic disability.

#### 1.4. Recommendations

#### 1.4.1. Primary Pathway for Documentation of Hearing Challenges

If hearing loss is suspected, a primary caregiver must arrange for a diagnostic hearing assessment with an audiologist or other medical professional as soon as possible to rule out permanent hearing loss. While FHL is typically temporary (e.g., due to a middle ear pathology), distinguishing it from permanent hearing loss requires a baseline audiogram completed by an audiologist or other medical professional. Permanent hearing loss necessitates a different treatment and follow-up process compared to FHL. For instance, a child with permanent hearing loss might be referred for genetic testing to identify the underlying cause.

Once a hearing loss is identified as fluctuating or conductive (i.e., due to an oscillating problem in the middle ear), a child may need a referral to an otolaryngologist for further consultation. The criteria for this referral include: (1) symptoms persist for 8–12 weeks, especially with speech delays or behavioral issues, (2) otologic abnormalities (e.g., recurrent otitis media or structural issues) are identified, (3) standard audiologic treatments fail, suggesting the need for medical or surgical options, and (4) the diagnosis is uncertain, or hearing loss worsens rapidly, requiring further diagnostic testing. This referral can be made by an audiologist, nurse practitioner, or physician based on the child's symptoms (e.g.,

ear drainage) and medical history (e.g., number of OM episodes in the past six months). Intervention, which may include surgery or medication, will ultimately be determined by a medical doctor. However, primary caregivers can support this process by accurately documenting a child's symptoms and behaviors and sharing these observations with everyone involved in a child's care and education.

#### 1.4.2. Secondary Pathway for Documentation of Hearing Challenges

Primary caregivers play a crucial role in documenting the symptoms and occurrences of fluctuating hearing loss (FHL) in children, while allied healthcare professionals primarily provide treatment recommendations. For this paper, primary caregivers are defined as individuals with repeated, consistent, and naturalistic interactions with a child suspected of or diagnosed with FHL. This includes the child's family members [53,54], teachers, and other support workers who have regular (e.g., daily or weekly) contact with the child and family [5,11]. Secondary caregivers, on the other hand, are those who have sporadic, intermittent, and possibly less frequent observations of the FHL. This group includes allied healthcare professionals, healthcare workers, audiologists, speech-language pathologists, family physicians, and ear-nose-throat physicians. An Indigenous or local healthcare worker as a primary caregiver and information conduit to secondary caregivers may be possible and/or beneficial in some communities.

Current literature supports the need for enhanced reciprocal dialogue between primary and secondary caregivers (i.e., Pathway 1 and Pathway 2) [17,29,50]. As stated above, a baseline hearing assessment is essential to rule out permanent hearing loss and provides a foundation to understand the degree and etiology of changes in a child's hearing. Once established, various tools can be used to document and monitor hearing-related outcomes. It is likely not practical or possible for a child in a remote or rural setting to see a clinician for every OM bout. In addition, sudden changes in a child's behavior, often misinterpreted as behavioral issues, can sometimes indicate episodic hearing loss [34]. Implementing documentation tools could help uncover otherwise concealed FHL.

Without consistent and reliable access to clinicians, alternative strategies are crucial to (1) increase reciprocal dialogue between primary and secondary caregivers, (2) document the real-time consequences of FHL, (3) gather informative, accurate data on representative populations, and (4) inform treatment approaches.

In the next section, we will discuss documentation tools that can be used in the secondary pathway to facilitate communication between primary and secondary caregivers.

#### 2. Tools for Documentation

#### 2.1. Ling-Madell-Hewitt (LMH) 10 Sound Check for Primary and Secondary Caregivers

If there is suspected hearing loss, an educator or guardian can perform an assessment such as the Ling-Madell-Hewitt (LMH) 10 Sound Check [58,59] which can be administered within the classroom (see Appendix A). This test utilizes speech sounds ranging from low to high frequencies and is a quick way to determine if a child is experiencing mild hearing difficulties. To further understand how the LMH 10 assesses hearing, it uses the "Speech Banana", which depicts the typical frequencies of conventional speech; this resource can be found online; and the link is available in the Supplementary Materials Section of this paper [60]. These evaluations are designed for real-life applications, are readily available, and are feasible to employ without extensive background knowledge and training. These tools must be administered in a quiet environment without visual cues to accurately assess what the child is hearing. If the LMH 10 is not feasible for environmental reasons (e.g., language spoken, access to printable materials), other options can be adapted to the child's environment.

# 2.2. Single-Case Experimental Designs (SCEDs) for Primary Caregivers

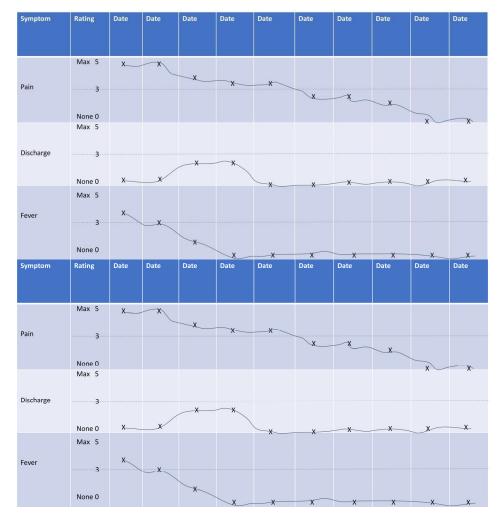
Another mode of tracking FHL is through single-case experimental designs (SCEDs). SCEDs are helpful and easy to implement as documentation for primary caregivers with

repeated and consistent access to a child's behavior. The approach is particularly useful for studying FHL, as the condition's frequency, duration, and severity are dynamic, with consequences that may be far-reaching regarding behavioral and cognitive performance and long-term outcomes [54]. SCEDs rank as high-quality evidence for treatment decision purposes in individual patients [61]. They present a lower risk (i.e., saying there are no FHL consequences when there are) compared to group-based studies utilizing a single time point. The inherent power of the design comes from repeated measures, and they are suited to investigate low-prevalence problems. However, there are several criteria that a primary stakeholder should consider when using a SCED to document FHL.

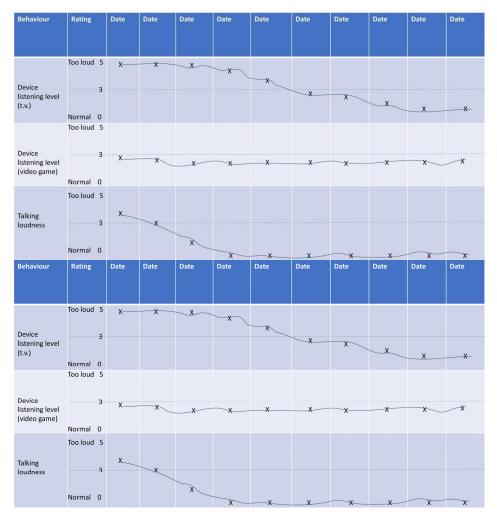
#### 2.2.1. How to Select Hearing-Related Behavior or Medical Symptom to Document

Choose a hearing-related behavior and/or medical symptom that can be easily monitored and tested regularly (i.e., television volume levels, ability to repeat words without visual cues, or the LMH 10 performance described above; see Figures 1–3 for examples of medical, behavioral, and school-related outcomes; see Table 1 for examples of possible outcomes). These outcomes will be the critical information that secondary caregivers can use to understand the magnitude and trajectory of FHL and make informed treatment decisions. Applications for mobile devices exist to screen or test hearing (e.g., hearWHO by the World Health Organization), but caution must be exercised as most are not meant to be used with children.

Family: Medical Symptoms (place an X mark when the symptom is present and at what level)



**Figure 1.** Example of documentation of medical symptoms from a parent of a child with FHL. To use, place an X when the symptom is present and at what level.



Family: Behavioural Symptoms (place an X mark when the symptom is present and at what level)

Figure 2. Example of documentation of behavioral symptoms from a parent of a child with FHL. To use, place an X when the symptom is present and at what level.

Table 1. Examples of Hearing-Related Outcomes to Measure in Home or School \*.

| Outcomes  |
|---|
| Acting out  |
| Loud/soft talking (change in typical loudness)  |
| Not following instructions  |
| Behavioural outbursts   |
| Asking for repeated instructions  |
| Repetitions of words with visual cue (i.e., seeing the mouth)   |
| Overly tired  |
| Repetitions of words without visual cue (i.e., hide the mouth)  |
| Misinterpreting instructions  |
| Performance on dictated spelling tasks  |
| Misunderstandings with peers  |
| Performance in language comprehension   |
| Ling 6 or 10 Sound Check  |
| Performance on story retell   |
| Detection of sounds/words   |
| Complaints of pain/fever/popping sounds   |
| Discrimination of sounds/words  |
| Lethargy  |
| Identification of sounds/words  |
| Capacity of workload  |
| otential behavioral, cognitive, and academic outcomes that could be impacted by FHL and tracked via a SCE |

Potential behavioral, cognitive, and academic outcomes that could be impacted by FHL and tracked via a SCED.

| Behaviour  | Rating  | Date   | Date | Date | Date | Date | Date     | Date | Date | Date       | Date         |
|--|---------|--------|------|------|------|------|----------|------|------|------------|--------------|
| Words  | 10      | X      | x    | X    |      | X    | _ x_     | ×    | X    | X          | X            |
| words<br>repeated<br>with visual<br>cue (out of<br>10) | 5       | ·      |      | ×    | X    |      |          |      | ~    |            |              |
| Words<br>repeated<br>without                           | 10<br>5 |        |      |      | X    | x    | X        | x    | *    | <b>_</b> X | *            |
| visual cue<br>(out of 10)                              | 0       | X—     | X    | X    |      |      |          |      |      |            |              |
| Asking for<br>repeated<br>instructions                 | 10      | X      | ×    | ×    |      |      |          |      |      |            |              |
|  | 0       |        |      | "    | ×    | X    | x        | x    | x    | ×          | <del>x</del> |
| Behaviour  | Rating  | Date   | Date | Date | Date | Date | Date     | Date | Date | Date       | Date         |
|  |         |        |      |      |      |      |          |      |      |            |              |
| Words<br>repeated<br>with visual<br>cue (out of<br>10) | 10<br>  | X      | X    | X    | x    | ×    | <u> </u> | X    | X    | <u> </u>   | X            |
| repeated<br>with visual<br>cue (out of                 | 5.      | X<br>X | ×    | X    | X    | x    | ×<br>×   | ×    | *    | _Х<br>Х    | x            |

Teacher: Behavioural Symptoms (place an X mark when the symptom is present and at what level)

**Figure 3.** Example of documentation of behavioral symptoms from a teacher of a child with FHL. To use, place an X when the symptom is present and at what level.

#### 2.2.2. How to Select Non-Hearing-Related Behavior to Document

Choose a non-hearing-related behavior that can be easily monitored and tested regularly (i.e., written instructions, finger tapping, ability to sort objects into animals and non-animals) (see Table 2 for examples). These behaviors should not be impacted by the FHL hearing loss. However, documenting these non-hearing behaviors serves as a great 'control' measure for the secondary caregivers to rule out alternate diagnoses. For example, suppose a child shows the capacity to solve age-appropriate math problems when presented in a written format but struggles to complete math problems presented verbally; in that case, general 'challenges with math' can be ruled out. The difference between hearing the math problems vs. understanding the math problems is disentangled by separating the two modes of presentation. Together, the 'control' measures provide a rich context for secondary caregivers to make informed decisions about treatment pathways.

Table 2. Examples of Non-Hearing-Related Outcomes to Measure in Home or School \*.

| Outcomes                      |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|-------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Focus (i.e., attention)       |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Age-appropriate math problems |  |  |  |  |  |  |

#### Table 2. Cont.

| Outcomes   |
|--|
| Simple motor tasks (i.e., finger tapping, jumping jacks, etc.)<br>Discrimination of objects/shapes (i.e., animal vs. non-animal) |
| Sorting of objects/shapes into categories  |

\* Potential behavioral, cognitive, and academic outcomes that would not be impacted by FHL and tracked via a SCED.

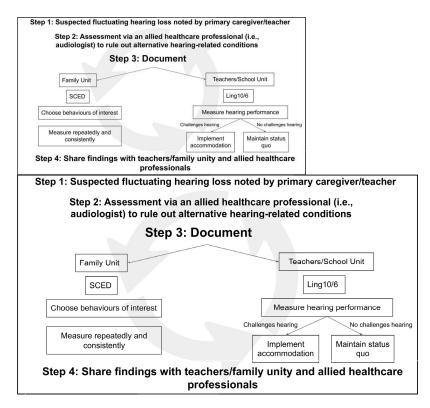
#### 2.2.3. The Benefit of Frequent Documentation

Measure the behaviors repeatedly. Repeated measurements help determine the natural variability of the behavior when a child is experiencing fluctuations in hearing. Repeated measurements allow caregivers to observe the effects of FHL over time, thereby demonstrating a clear cause-and-effect relationship. By comparing behavior before, during, and after the FHL episode, healthcare providers can assess the direct impact of the FHL on the target behavior.

What is particularly useful about the SCED approach to documentation is that the charts can be easily generated (either by hand or via print), put into easily accessible areas (i.e., on a bedroom door, on the fridge, hanging on a locker, etc.), and take minimal time/effort to populate, all of which contribute to increased adherence to repeated measurements without a significant burden on the primary caregiver. Blank versions of Figures 1–3 are available in Appendix B for use.

#### 2.3. Summary of Primary and Secondary Pathways

First, arrange for a full diagnostic hearing assessment with a medical professional (e.g., audiologist) as soon as possible. Once a hearing loss is confirmed to be fluctuating and conductive secondary to OM: (1) identify and list all the primary and secondary caregivers in a child's life, (2) choose the documentation tool(s), (3) consistently measure and document the chosen behaviors, (4) share the documentation with all identified caregivers, and (5) implement the appropriate accommodations (Figure 4).



**Figure 4.** Schematic representation of the potential knowledge sharing between primary caregivers and allied healthcare professionals regarding fluctuating hearing loss.

#### 3. Potential Impact of Secondary Pathways on Understanding FHL Consequences

Unlike permanent types of hearing loss, a common recommendation for FHL is a 'wait and see' approach, as the medical consequences associated with FHL often resolve on their own [1,62,63]. However, the literature on the academic, psychosocial, and emotional consequences associated with FHL suggests a need to implement some form of treatment, with the ultimate goal being to provide consistent, high-quality access to speech and language [33,58,64–69].

Numerous studies suggest that the family unit typically provides children with their first introduction to speech and sound [68,70–72]. If a child can hear various words and phrases, they will have a greater opportunity to establish a robust lexicon [43,66,67,70–74]. Opportunities that encourage vocabulary acquisition include reading bedtime stories and engaging in conversations around the table. The quality of the phrases children hear is more important than the number of words because incorrect terms must be retaught [33,65–68]. Children with FHL may miss these listening and learning opportunities if changes are not promptly implemented.

The Bachelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education has developed the Families as First Teachers (FaFT) program, which provides tools for families to use when their children (0–3 years) have episodic hearing loss. These resources are geared toward remote locations where clinicians are not readily available and follow a play-centered approach that families can seamlessly implement into daily activities [54].

#### Supports for Children with FHL

In classrooms, high noise levels can make it difficult for children to hear speech over the surrounding noise. For children with FHL, their ability to hear the teacher's voice over environmental noise may vary daily. The signal-to-noise ratio (SNR) is the difference between the desired signal (e.g., teacher's voice) and background sounds (e.g., ventilation fan). Improving the SNR for children with FHL can also help significantly reduce listening fatigue. Listening effort refers to the cognitive resources required to understand auditory information, especially in challenging listening environments [69]. This concept is often associated with situations where background noise, poor acoustics, or hearing impairments make it difficult to comprehend speech, requiring the listener to allocate additional mental effort to process and interpret the auditory input. Listening effort is not just about hearing the sounds but involves actively focusing, processing, and understanding the spoken message, often leading to cognitive fatigue when sustained over time. Soundfield systems (i.e., FM systems) are examples of technologies that educators can use to improve sound quality for all children, those with and without FHL [6,18,25,65]. In Canada, several schools have piloted and advocated for schoolwide soundfield systems because of their widespread benefits for students and teachers [75]. Universal soundfield systems may also eliminate the families' obligation to purchase hearing instruments, which can be costly.

Classroom accommodations for students with FHL should be similar to those for students with permanent hearing loss. Strategies include pre-teaching, prioritized seating, minimizing background noise, providing text or visual materials to complement instruction, and frequent check-ins to ensure understanding [69]. Teachers should monitor the child's progress relative to these accommodations to determine their effectiveness.

Some audiology clinics have loaner programs where children can borrow non-surgical bone conduction devices (BCDs). These technologies are advantageous because they can also be used outside the classroom, such as at home or in recreational facilities. BCDs also lend themselves to further documentation via single-case experimental designs (SCEDs), allowing primary caregivers to monitor hearing and behavioral changes with and without the device. This approach provides a more accurate picture of the potential benefits being realized.

# 4. Summary

Middle ear infections are prevalent in young children [3], and a common sequela of this condition is fluctuating hearing loss (FHL). Despite the temporary nature of FHL, it can have lasting impacts on developmental outcomes, including auditory and language development [2,6,33–35,43,74,76,77]. Children with FHL face increased educational and psychosocial challenges due to the variable nature of the condition, which often goes unnoticed. While much of the existing literature on FHL focuses on post-episodic outcomes, there is a need for real-time strategies and recommendations for managing FHL as it occurs.

Establishing a collaborative dialogue between primary and secondary caregivers is essential for identifying and managing FHL in real time. Primary caregivers are responsible for documenting changes in hearing that can then be used by secondary caregivers (e.g., educators, healthcare providers) to develop timely and effective treatment strategies. Although hearing loss may be temporary, timely intervention is critical as the effects can sometimes become permanent [1,6,10,12].

Children in marginalized communities, particularly those in rural and Indigenous settings, are disproportionately affected by FHL secondary to otitis media (OM) and are often undertreated for hearing loss [6,7,9,10,12,54,68,78]. The recommendations in this guideline are designed to be practical and accessible, with a specific focus on rural and Indigenous communities, helping to bridge the gap in care and ensuring that documentation practices are inclusive and widely applicable.

#### 5. Study Limitations and Future Directions

This guideline has been developed based on peer-reviewed literature and our team's perspectives/inputs (including those we have consulted): audiologists, academics with HL, parents of children with FHL, an Indigenous social worker, and an otolaryngologist. The recommendations should be supplemented with professional guidance and care. In addition, every family's setting and experience are unique. We welcome feedback from users and readers to improve future iterations of this guide so it can be applicable to all situations.

#### 6. Conclusions

Ongoing, consistent monitoring of FHL is the foundational step in understanding the full extent and impact of this condition on children [2,64,77,78]. However, there remains a need for more representative and inclusive studies on FHL, especially those that focus on rural and Indigenous communities. Expanding the research base will provide a clearer understanding of FHL, helping to develop more effective support systems.

When primary caregivers actively monitor a child's hearing, they become better equipped to advocate for the necessary resources to support that child's learning, speech, and language development. This is particularly crucial for populations in remote areas, where access to professional services is often limited. The tools we recommend are accessible, easy to use, and empower primary caregivers to take an active role in the documentation process, thus facilitating the knowledge transmission between caregivers and professionals.

While these recommendations are not exhaustive, they aim to foster a collaborative dialogue between families, educators, and healthcare professionals. By working together, we can better understand the far-reaching effects of OM and implement more personalized and effective management strategies for FHL in children.

**Supplementary Materials:** The following supporting information can be downloaded at https: //ohns.ucsf.edu/audiology/education/peds (accessed on 27 November 2024): SpeechBanna; https: //bit.ly/3j7svLU\_LMH10SoundTest (accessed on 27 November 2024).

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, J.C. and W.H.; methodology, J.C., S.A.S., W.H. and A.V.O.; writing—original draft preparation, C.C., K.J. and A.V.O.; writing—review and editing, C.C., K.J.,

A.V.O., S.A.S., W.H. and J.C.; visualization, C.C., K.J. and J.C.; supervision, J.C. and W.H.; project administration, A.V.O. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

**Data Availability Statement:** No new data were created in this study instead, this guideline is an amalgamation of published findings and recommendations which have been synthesized from the literature and individuals with expertise in their respective fields. Data sharing is not applicable to this article.

Acknowledgments: This paper's authors would like to thank Ingrid Tenkate for using her experience with local Indigenous communities and social work to provide insight into the functionality of these documentation strategies within Indigenous and remote communities. We would also like to thank Trina Rosaasen, pediatric otolaryngologist, for her feedback and suggestions on the final manuscript.

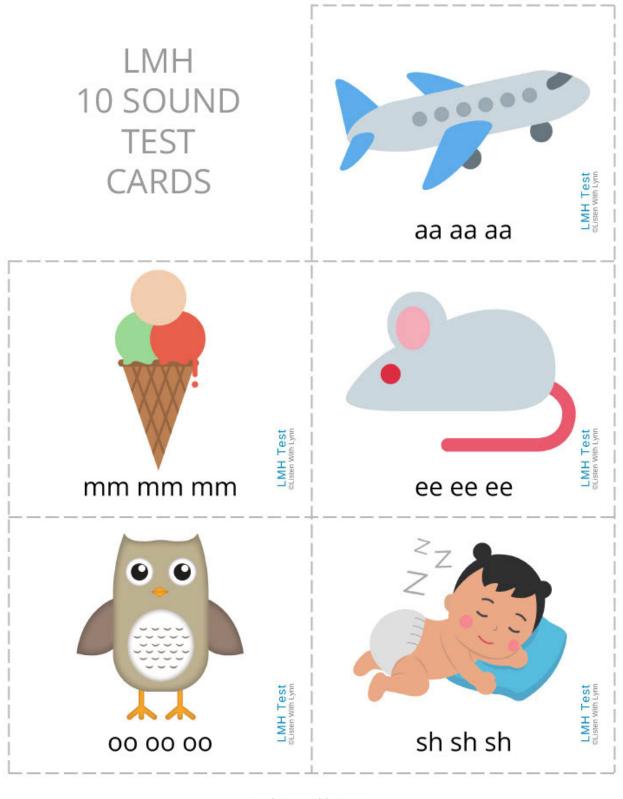
Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

# Appendix A

|       |    |                     |                    |            | eening Test<br>ligh Frequency |          |   |
|-------|----|---------------------|--------------------|------------|-------------------------------|----------|---|
| Child | :  |                     | Tester             | •          |                               | Date:    |   |
|       |    | Right<br>Technology | Left<br>Technology | Binaural   | Remote Mic<br>System          |          | 00 00 00  |
|       | а  |                     |                    |            |                               |          |   |
|       | u  |                     |                    |            |                               |          | ja katala kata |
|       | i  |                     |                    |            |                               | 00 00 00 | ath sh sh   |
|       | l  |                     |                    |            |                               | 2        |   |
|       | s  |                     |                    |            |                               | AT 12 13 |   |
|       | m  |                     |                    |            |                               |          |   |
|       | n  |                     |                    |            |                               |          |   |
|       | h  |                     |                    |            |                               | rn m m   | hhhhh   |
|       | z  |                     |                    |            |                               |          | 4   |
|       | dʒ |                     |                    |            |                               | 222      |   |
| ,     |    |                     | © Listen           | V/Ith Lynn |                               |          |   |

© Listen With Lynn

Figure A1. Blank Worksheet for the LMH 10 Sound Screening Test.



©Listen With Lynn HEARSAYLW.COM

Figure A2. Cont.



©Listen With Lynn HEARSAYLW.COM

Figure A2. Flashcards for LMH 10 administration.

# Appendix B

# Primary Unit: Medical Symptoms (place an X mark when the symptom is present and at what level)

| Symptom | Rating | Date |
|---------|--------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
|         |        |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|         |        |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|         | Max 5  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|         |        |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|         | 3      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|         |        |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|         | None 0 |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|         | Max 5  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|         |        |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|         | 3      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|         | News   |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|         | None 0 |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|         | Max 5  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|         |        |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|         | 3      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|         |        |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|         | None 0 |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |

**Figure A3.** A blank version of Figure 1, for documentation of medical symptoms from a parent of a child with FHL. To use place an X when the symptom is present and at what level.

Primary Unit: Personal/Behavioural Symptoms (place an X mark when the symptom is present and at what level)

| Behaviour | Rating | Date |
|-----------|--------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
|           |        |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           |        |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           | Max 5  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           |        |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           | 3      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           |        |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           | None 0 |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           | Max 5  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           |        |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           | 3      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           | News   |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           | None 0 |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           | Max 5  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           |        |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           | 3      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           |        |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           | None 0 |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |

**Figure A4.** Blank lank version of Figure 2, for documentation of behavioral symptoms from a parent of a child with FHL. To use place an X when the symptom is present and at what level.

| Behaviour | Rating | Date |
|-----------|--------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
|           |        |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           |        |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           | Max 5  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           |        |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           | 3      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           |        |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           | None 0 |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           | Max 5  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           |        |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           | 3      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           |        |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           | None 0 |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           | Max 5  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           |        |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           | 3      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           |        |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           | None 0 |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |

Teacher: Personal/Behavioural Symptoms (place an X mark when the symptom is present and at what level)

**Figure A5.** Blank version of Figure 3, for documentation of behavioral symptoms from a teacher of a child with FHL. To use place an X when the symptom is present and at what level.

# References

- 1. Schilder, A.G.M.; Chonmaitree, T.; Cripps, A.W.; Rosenfeld, R.M.; Casselbrant, M.L.; Haggard, M.P.; Venekamp, R.P. Otitis Media. *Nat. Rev. Dis. Primers* **2016**, 2. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Benoit, M.; Orlando, M.; Henry, K.; Paul, A. Amplitude Modulation Detection in Children with a History of Temporary Conductive Hearing Loss Remains Impaired for Years After Restoration of Normal Hearing. J. Assoc. Res. Otolaryngol. 2019, 20, 89–98. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Brennan-Jones, C.G.; Hakeem, H.H.; da Costa, C.; Weng, W.; Whitehouse, A.J.O.; Jamieson, S.E.; Eikelboom, R.H. Cross-Sectional Prevalence and Risk Factors for Otitis Media and Hearing Loss in Australian Children Aged 5 to 7 Years: A Prospective Cohort Study. Aust. J. Otolaryngol. 2020, 3. [CrossRef]
- 4. Oliver, R. *Chronic Otitis Media (Middle Ear Infection) and Hearing Loss;* American Academy of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery: Alexandria, VA, USA, 2010.
- 5. Poirier, B.; Hedges, J.; Jamieson, L. Walking Together: Relational Yarning as a Mechanism to Ensure Meaningful and Ethical Indigenous Oral Health Research in Australia. *Aust. N. Z. J. Public Health* **2022**, *46*, 354–360. [CrossRef]
- 6. Coates, H.L.; Morris, P.S.; Leach, A.J.; Couzos, S. Otitis Media in Aboriginal Children: Tackling a Major Health Problem. *Med. J. Aust.* 2002, *177*, 177–178. [CrossRef]
- DeLacy, J.; Dune, T.; Macdonald, J.J. The Social Determinants of Otitis Media in Aboriginal Children in Australia: Are We Addressing the Primary Causes? A Systematic Content Review. BMC Public Health 2020, 20, 492. [CrossRef]
- 8. Howard, M.; Volkov, I.; Mirsky, R.; Garell, P.; Noh, M.D.; Granner, M.; Damasio, H.; Steinschneider, M.; Reale, R.; Hind, J.; et al. Auditory Cortex on the Human Posterior Superior Temporal Gyrus. *J. Comp. Neurol.* **2000**, *416*, 79–92. [CrossRef]
- 9. Jervis-Bardy, J.; Sanchez, L.; Carney, A.S. Otitis Media in Indigenous Australian Children: Review of Epidemiology and Risk Factors. *J. Laryngol. Otol.* 2014, 128, S16–S27. [CrossRef]
- 10. O'Connor, T.E.; Perry, C.F.; Lannigan, F.J. Complications of Otitis Media in Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Children. *Med. J. Aust.* 2009, 191. [CrossRef]
- 11. Bowd, A.D. Otitis Media: Health and Social Consequences for Aboriginal Youth in Canada's North. *Int. J. Circumpolar Health* **2005**, *64*, 5–15. [CrossRef]
- 12. Karunanayake, C.P.; Albritton, W.; Rennie, D.C.; Lawson, J.A.; McCallum, L.; Gardipy, P.J.; Seeseequasis, J.; Naytowhow, A.; Hagel, L.; McMullin, K.; et al. Ear Infection and Its Associated Risk Factors in First Nations and Rural School-Aged Canadian Children. *Int. J. Pediatr.* **2016**, 2016, e1523897. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- 13. King, T.; Schindler, R.; Chavda, S.; Conly, J. Dimensions of Poverty as Risk Factors for Antimicrobial Resistant Organisms in Canada: A Structured Narrative Review. *Antimicrob. Resist. Infect. Control* **2022**, 11. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- 14. Carew, P.; Shepherd, D.A.; Smith, L.; Soh, Q.R.; Sung, V. Language and Health-Related Quality of Life Outcomes of Children Early-Detected with Unilateral and Mild Bilateral Hearing Loss. *Front. Pediatr.* **2023**, *11*. [CrossRef]
- 15. Ching, T.; Dillon, H.; Leigh, G.; Cupples, L. Learning from the Longitudinal Outcomes of Children with Hearing Impairment (LOCHI) Study: Summary of 5-Year Findings and Implications. *Int. J. Audiol.* **2018**, *57*, S105–S111. [CrossRef] [PubMed]

- 16. Ching, T.Y.; Dillon, H.; Button, L.; Seeto, M.; Van Buynder, P.; Marnane, V.; Cupples, L.; Leigh, G. Age at Intervention for Permanent Hearing Loss and 5-Year Language Outcomes. *Pediatrics* **2017**, *140*, e20164274. [CrossRef]
- 17. Khalid, L.; Muhammad Asghar, Z. Exploring Institutional Support for Inclusion of HearingImpaired Learners in Regular Primary Schools. *Int. Rev. Soc. Sci.* 2021, *9*, 258–270. [CrossRef]
- 18. Lieu, J.E.C.; Kenna, M.; Anne, S.; Davidson, L. Hearing Loss in Children: A Review. JAMA—J. Am. Med. Assoc. 2020, 324, 2195–2205. [CrossRef]
- 19. Lund, E.; Douglas, M.; Schuele, M. Semantic Richness and Word Learning in Children with Hearing Loss Who Are Developing Spoken Language: A Single Case Design Study. *Deaf. Educ. Int.* **2015**, *17*, 163–175. [CrossRef]
- Pittman, A.L.; De Diego-Lazaro, B. What Can a Child Do with One Normal-Hearing Ear? Speech Perception and Word Learning in Children with Unilateral and Bilateral Hearing Losses Relative to Peers with Normal Hearing. *Ear Hear.* 2021, 1228–1237. [CrossRef]
- Pittman, A.L.; Rash, M.A. Auditory Lexical Decision and Repetition in Children: Effects of Acoustic and Lexical Constraints. *Ear Hear.* 2016, 37, e119–e128. [CrossRef]
- Pittman, A.; Schuett, B. Effects of Semantic and Acoustic Context on Nonword Detection in Children with Hearing Loss. *Ear Hear.* 2013, *3*, 213–220. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- 23. Pittman, A.L.; Lewis, D.E.; Hoover, B.M.; Stelmachowicz, P.G. Rapid Word-Learning in Normal-Hearing and Hearing-Impaired Children: Effects of Age, Receptive Vocabulary, and High-Frequency Amplification. *Ear Hear.* **2005**, *26*, 619–629. [CrossRef]
- 24. Pittman, A.; Vincent, K.; Carter, L. Immediate and Long-Term Effects of Hearing Loss on the Speech Perception of Children. J. Acoust. Soc. Am. 2009, 126, 1477–1485. [CrossRef]
- 25. Pittman, A. Perceptual Coherence in Listeners Having Longstanding Childhood Learning Losses, Listeners with Adult-Onset Hearing Losses, and Listeners with Normal Hearing. *Acoust. Soc. Am.* **2008**, 123, 441–449. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Shojaei, E.; Jafari, Z.; Gholami, M. Effect of Early Intervention on Language Development in Hearing-Impaired Children. Iran. J. Otorhinolaryngol. 2016, 28, 13–21.
- 27. Stelmachowicz, P.G.; Pittman, A.L.; Hoover, B.M.; Lewis, D.E. Novel-Word Learning in Children with Normal Hearing and Hearing Loss. *Ear Hear.* **2004**, *25*, 47. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Tomblin, J.B.; Harrison, M.; Ambrose, S.E.; Walker, E.A.; Oleson, J.J.; Moeller, M.P. Language Outcomes in Young Children with Mild to Severe Hearing Loss. *Ear Hear.* 2015, *36*, 76S. [CrossRef]
- 29. Tomblin, J.B.; Walker, E.A.; McCreery, R.W.; Arenas, R.M.; Harrison, M.; Moeller, M.P. Outcomes of Children with Hearing Loss: Data Collection and Methods. *Ear Hear.* **2015**, *36*, 14S. [CrossRef]
- 30. Balk, S.J.; Fink, D. Protecting Infants' and Children's Hearing. Hear. J. 2022, 75, 18–19. [CrossRef]
- Kaplan, A.B.; Kozin, E.D.; Remenschneider, A.; Eftekhari, K.; Jung, D.H.; Polley, D.B.; Lee, D.J. Amblyaudia. Otolaryngol.-Head Neck Surg. 2016, 154, 247–255. [CrossRef]
- Levin, M. Learning with a Central Auditory Processing Disorder: Phenomenological Case Studies Exploring Pupils' Experiences; University
  of Johannesburg: Johanesburg, South Africa, 2016; pp. 1–227.
- Reichman, J.; Healey, W.C. Learning Disabilities and Conductive Hearing Loss Involving Otitis Media. J. Learn. Disabil. 1983, 16, 272–278. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- 34. Tharpe, A.M.; Bess, F.H. Minimal, Progressive, and Fluctuating Hearing Losses in Children. Characteristics, Identification, and Management. *Pediatr. Clin. N. Am.* **1999**, *46*, 65–78. [CrossRef]
- Whitton, J.P.; Polley, D.B. Evaluating the Perceptual and Pathophysiological Consequences of Auditory Deprivation in Early Postnatal Life: A Comparison of Basic and Clinical Studies. *JARO-J. Assoc. Res. Otolaryngol.* 2011, 12, 535–546. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Ansari, M.S.; Sood, A.S.; Gill, J.S. National Infant Screening for Hearing Program in India: Necessity, Significance and Justification. Indian J. Otolaryngol. Head Neck Surg. 2021. [CrossRef]
- 37. Abdelmalek, M.; Ismail, M.; Badi, H.; Abolefa, W. Incidence of Hearing Impairment among Children Presented with Speech-Language Delay. *World J. Pharm. Med. Res.* **2022**, *8*, 1–4.
- 38. Meinzen-Derr, J.; Wiley, S.; Choo, D. Impact of Early Intervention on Expressive and Receptive Language Development Among Young Children with Permanent Hearing Loss. *Am. Ann. Deaf* **2011**, *155*, 580–591. [CrossRef]
- Bigelow, R.T.; Reed, N.S.; Brewster, K.K.; Huang, A.; Rebok, G.; Rutherford, B.R.; Lin, F.R. Association of Hearing Loss with Psychological Distress and Utilization of Mental Health Services among Adults in the United States. *JAMA Netw. Open* 2020, 3. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- 40. Sanfins, M.D.; Bertazolli, L.F.; Skarzynski, P.H.; Skarzynska, M.B.; Donadon, C.; Colella-Santos, M.F. Otoacoustic Emissions in Children with Long-Term Middle Ear Disease. *Life* 2020, *10*, 287. [CrossRef]
- Shan, A.; Ting, J.; Price, C.; Coman, A.; Willink, A.; Reed, N.; Nieman, C. Hearing Loss and Employment: A Systematic Review of the Association between Hearing Loss and Employment among Adults. *J. Laryngol. Otol.* 2020, 134, 387–397. [CrossRef]
- 42. Hogan, S.C.M.; Moore, D.R. Impaired Binaural Hearing in Children Produced by a Threshold Level of Middle Ear Disease. *JARO—J. Assoc. Res. Otolaryngol.* **2003**, *4*, 123–129. [CrossRef]
- Shetty, H.N.; Koonoor, V. Sensory Deprivation Due to Otitis Media Episodes in Early Childhood and Its Effect at Later Age: A Psychoacoustic and Speech Perception Measure. Int. J. Pediatr. Otorhinolaryngol. 2016, 90, 181–187. [CrossRef]

- 44. McCreery, R.W.; Walker, E.A. Variation in Auditory Experience Affects Language and Executive Function Skills in Children Who Are Hard of Hearing. *Ear Hear.* **2022**, *43*, 347–360. [CrossRef]
- 45. McCreery, R.W.; Walker, E.A.; Spratford, M.; Lewis, D.; Brennan, M. Auditory, Cognitive, and Linguistic Factors Predict Speech Recognition in Adverse Listening Conditions for Children with Hearing Loss. *Front. Neurosci.* **2019**, *13*, 01093. [CrossRef]
- Davidson, L.S.; Geers, A.E.; Hale, S.; Sommers, M.M.; Brenner, C.; Spehar, B. Effects of Early Auditory Deprivation on Working Memory and Reasoning Abilities in Verbal and Visuospatial Domains for Pediatric Cochlear Implant Recipients. *Ear Hear.* 2019, 40, 517. [CrossRef]
- 47. Moore, D.R.; Zobay, O.; Ferguson, M.A. Minimal and Mild Hearing Loss in Children: Association with Auditory Perception, Cognition, and Communication Problems. *Ear Hear.* **2020**, *41*, 720. [CrossRef]
- 48. Laugen, N.J.; Jacobsen, K.H.; Rieffe, C.; Wichstrøm, L. Social Skills in Preschool Children with Unilateral and Mild Bilateral Hearing Loss. *Deaf. Educ. Int.* 2017, 19, 54–62. [CrossRef]
- 49. Warner-Czyz, A.D.; Loy, B.A.; Evans, C.; Wetsel, A.; Tobey, E.A. Self-Esteem in Children and Adolescents with Hearing Loss. *Trends Hear.* **2015**, *19*, 2331216515572615. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- 50. Elbeltagy, R. Prevalence of Mild Hearing Loss in Schoolchildren and Its Association with Their School Performance. *Int. Arch. Otorhinolaryngol.* **2020**, *24*, e93–e98. [CrossRef]
- 51. Sarant, J.Z.; Harris, D.C.; Bennet, L.A. Academic Outcomes for School-Aged Children With Severe–Profound Hearing Loss and Early Unilateral and Bilateral Cochlear Implants. *J. Speech Lang. Hear. Res.* **2015**, *58*, 1017–1032. [CrossRef]
- John, M.; Dunne, E.M.; Licciardi, P.V.; Satzke, C.; Wijburg, O.; Robins-Browne, R.M.; O'Leary, S. Otitis Media among High-Risk Populations: Can Probiotics Inhibit Streptococcus Pneumoniae Colonisation and the Risk of Disease? *Eur. J. Clin. Microbiol. Infect. Dis.* 2013, 32, 1101–1110. [CrossRef]
- Ford-Jones, L.; Friedberg, J.; McGeer, A.; Simpson, K.; Croxford, R.; Willey, B.; Coyte, P.C.; Kellner, J.D.; Daya, H. Microbiologic Findings and Risk Factors for Antimicrobial Resistance at Myringotomy for Tympanostomy Tube Placement\*/a Prospective Study of 601 Children in Toronto. *Int. J. Pediatr. Otorhinolaryngol.* 2002, 66, 227–242. [CrossRef]
- 54. Howard, D. *Families as First Teachers (FaFT) Hearing Loss Literature Review;* Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education: Batchelor, Australia, 2012.
- Castleden, H.; Morgan, V.S.; Lamb, C. "I Spent the First Year Drinking Tea": Exploring Canadian University Researchers' Perspectives on Community-Based Participatory Research Involving Indigenous Peoples. *Can. Geogr.* 2012, 56, 160–179. [CrossRef]
- 56. Herman, R.D.K. Approaching Research in Indigenous Settings: Nine Guidelines; Centre de Recherche en Droit Public: Montréal, QC, Canada, 2015; ISBN 978-1-926528-67-0.
- 57. Smith, L.T. Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples; Zed Books Ltd.: London, UK, 1999; ISBN 978-1-85649-623-0.
- Glista, D.; Scollie, S.; Moodie, S.; Easwar, V.; Network of Pediatric Audiologists of Canada. The Ling 6(HL) Test: Typical Pediatric Performance Data and Clinical Use Evaluation. J. Am. Acad. Audiol. 2014, 25, 1008–1021. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Wood, L.; Madell, J.; Hewitt, J. 10 Sound Test with Sound Screening Test. 2021. Available online: https://wvde.us/wp-content/ uploads/2024/02/LMH-10-SOUND-TEST.pdf (accessed on 19 November 2024).
- 60. University of California San Francisco Speech Banana Hearing and Speech Audiology Otolaryngology | Head and Neck Surgery. Available online: https://ohns.ucsf.edu/audiology/education/peds (accessed on 19 November 2024).
- 61. University of Oxford. Center of Evidence-Based Research Home. Available online: https://www.cebm.net/l (accessed on 19 November 2024).
- 62. Qureishi, A.; Lee, Y.; Belfield, K.; Birchall, J.P.; Daniel, M. Update on Otitis Media—Prevention and Treatment. *Infect. Drug Resist.* 2014, 7, 15–24. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- 63. Danishyar, A.; Ashurst, J.V. Acute Otitis Media; StatPearls Publishing: Treasure Island, FL, USA, 2024.
- 64. Donadon, C.; Sanfins, M.D.; Borges, L.R.; Colella-Santos, M.F. Auditory Training: Effects on Auditory Abilities in Children with History of Otitis Media. *Int. J. Pediatr. Otorhinolaryngol.* **2019**, *118*, 177–180. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- 65. Nailand, L.; Munro, N.; Purcell, A. Identifying the Factors That Affect Consistent Hearing Aid Use in Young Children With Early Identified Hearing Loss: A Scoping Review. *Ear Hear.* **2022**, *43*, 733. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Deggouj, N.; Castelein, S.; Grégoire, A.; Laroche, H.; De Graeuwe, C.; de Touf, C.; Desuter, G.; Rombaux, P.; Hupin, C. Functional Consequences of Chronic ENT Inflammation on the Development of Hearing and Communicative Abilities. *B-ENT* 2012, *8*, 105–115.
- 67. Gharashi, K. Challenges of Deaf and Hearing-Impaired Children. Int. J. Biol. Pharm. Allied Sci. 2015, 4, 460–466.
- Pichora-Fuller, M.K.; Kramer, S.E.; Eckert, M.A.; Edwards, B.; Hornsby, B.W.Y.; Humes, L.E.; Lemke, U.; Lunner, T.; Matthen, M.; Mackersie, C.L.; et al. Hearing Impairment and Cognitive Energy: The Framework for Understanding Effortful Listening (FUEL). *Ear Hear.* 2016, *37* (Suppl. S1), 5S–27S. [CrossRef]
- Luckner, J.L.; Muir, S. Successful Students Who Are Deaf in General Education Settings. Am. Ann. Deaf. 2001, 146, 435–446. [CrossRef]
- Gray, S.; Pittman, A.; Weinhold, J. Effect of Phonotactic Probability and Neighborhood Density on Word-Learning Configuration by Preschoolers with Typical Development and Specific Language Impairment. J. Speech Lang. Hear. Res. 2014, 57, 1011–1025. [CrossRef]

- 71. Holte, L.; Walker, E.; Oleson, J.; Spratford, M.; Moeller, M.P.; Roush, P.; Ou, H.; Tomblin, J.B. Factors Influencing Follow-up to Newborn Hearing Screening for Infants Who Are Hard of Hearing. *Am. J. Audiol.* **2012**, *21*, 163–174. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Khavarghazalani, B.; Farahani, F.; Emadi, M.; Hosseni Dastgerdi, Z. Auditory Processing Abilities in Children with Chronic Otitis Media with Effusion. *Acta Oto-Laryngol.* 2016, 136, 456–459. [CrossRef]
- 73. Zumach, A.; Gerrits, E.; Chenault, M.; Anteunis, L. Otitis Media and Speech-in-Noise Recognition in School-Aged Children. *Audiol. Neuro-Otol.* **2008**, *14*, 121–129. [CrossRef]
- 74. Tailor, V.K.; Schwarzkopf, D.S.; Dahlmann-Noor, A.H. Neuroplasticity and Amblyopia: Vision at the Balance Point. *Curr. Opin. Neurol.* **2017**, *30*, 74–83. [CrossRef]
- 75. Sound Science-Classroom Sound Systems Enhance Learning for All; Winnipeg School Division: Winnipeg, MB, Canada, 2022; pp. 1–4.
- Gravel, J.S.; Wallace, I.F.; Ruben, R.J. Auditory Consequences of Early Mild Hearing Loss Associated with Otitis Media. *Acta Oto-Laryngol.* 1996, 116, 219–221. [CrossRef]
- Haque, D.M.S.; Rahman, D.M.A.; Islam, D.G.M. A Clinicopathological Study on Chronic Otitis Media in Children at a Tertiary Care Hospital. SAS J. Surg. 2022, 8, 434–439. [CrossRef]
- 78. Searight, F.T.; Singh, R.; Peterson, D.C. Otitis Media with Effusion; StatPearls Publishing: Treasure Island, FL, USA, 2022.

**Disclaimer/Publisher's Note:** The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.