Date: [Date you are writing the letter]

To: [Teacher’s name]

Re: [Insert your child’s name]’s hearing loss and the classroom this school year

Dear [Insert teacher’s name],

[Introductory paragraph]

* State the reason for the letter
* Include a picture of your child for familiarization of your child’s face
* Provide an overview of your child’s hearing loss, including current hearing status with what hearing device(s) they use, and any new changes in health or development.
* Provide background information on your child’s hearing loss in the classroom. This would include information regarding last year’s educational placement and anticipated needs this year.

[2nd paragraph]

* Restate your child’s hearing needs including providing information on your child’s hearing devices:
  + Include any literature or user guide information on your child’s hearing loss device(s).
  + Provide contact information for your child’s audiologist and when his/her last appointment occurred.
  + Provide the manufacturer support information including the website and customer service contact information in case the teacher can’t reach you or your child’s audiologist.
  + Provide guidance to the teacher regarding the importance of your child wearing his device all day, every day. Clearly state what settings the device should be on and the importance of verifying that the device is working each day and how to accomplish daily listening checks.

[3rd paragraph]

* Restate your child’s hearing needs in the classroom, including:
  + Outline any classroom accommodations that may be necessary. These would include preferential seating, use of [Wireless Mini-Microphone 2+](http://connections.cochlearamericas.com/a-new-school-year-and-the-new-mini-mic-2/?utm_campaign=c-c-e-aug_17meaningful_innovation_f18&utm_medium=blog&utm_source=hearingconnections&utm_content=BTS_Intro_Letter), FM/Roger systems, list any special services they will be pulled out for and provide an overview of any physical limitations your child may have.
  + Highlights of your child’s IEP including any additional services they will be receiving this new school year.
  + Provide information on all school personnel that will be working with your child this school year.
  + Outline some potential boundaries to access for your child and easy things the teacher can do outside of the IEP, including eliminate background noise by shutting the door, face the students when speaking, avoid obscuring face with hands/objects, closed captioning, etc.
  + An overview of any summer services your child participated in and include copies of any pertinent reports that you want the teacher to review prior to the start of the school year.

[Closing paragraph]

* Summarize again the reason for the letter and why it is important to you.
* Thank the teacher for their time and efforts on behalf of your child.
* Highlight the importance of open communication between the entire educational team that supports your child.
* Provide your contact information and the best time to reach you.

Sincerely,

[Sign your name]

Subject: Kelin M. introduction

Good afternoon!

My name is Kelin M., and I look forward to being in your class this semester. This email is intended to provide a concise introduction to my hearing loss and how it affects my ability to communicate and learn in the classroom setting.

I have done well throughout school in a mainstream setting with minimal support in place due to accommodations and awesome teachers with whom I have worked with to ensure barriers are minimized. With access to communication, I consider myself fully enabled to succeed.

Although I was born deaf, I underwent surgery when I was three years old to receive a cochlear implant (CI) in my right ear, which means I only have functional hearing out of my right ear. This unilateral hearing means that sound is one dimensional. Background noise is given the same precedence as a speaker’s voice, and I have difficulty localizing sound. This can create difficulties in many settings; however, there are easy and effective solutions to most access issues.

**About my cochlear implant**: The CI’s external sound processor looks like a large hearing aid. The sound processor captures sound and converts it into digital signals that are then sent to the internal device. The internal device converts these signals into electrical energy along an electrode array in my cochlea. Electrodes stimulate my auditory nerve, bypassing damaged hair cells, and the brain perceives the signals as sound. It is very reliable technology and runs on batteries.

The microphone is directional, meaning I hear sound coming from the front and right of me. Sound coming from behind or the left of me is faint. Therefore, I supplement my hearing with lip reading.

**Barriers exist everywhere, and they are often invisible, much like hearing loss. These are some especially challenging situations for me:**

* A poor view of speaker’s face – I personally rely on lip-reading.
* The speaker is distant – It’s easier for me to be close to the signal I am trying to hear.
* More than one speaker at a time – Since I lip-read, I may miss information if it is coming from multiple sources.
* Poor acoustics – Reverberant noise competes with the signal I am trying to hear.
* Background noise – HVAC noise, hallway or outside noise, music competes with the signal I am trying to hear.
* Auditory activities with no visual – recorded voices, uncaptioned videos.

**Practices that ensure access in the classroom for me:**

* Face the class when speaking.
* Avoid obscuring face with hands/objects.
* Preferential seating – I will often choose a seat in the second row on the left side of a classroom. Circular seating is optimal in discussion-based classes as I can see each speaker’s face.
* Repeat student questions in the teacher response or highlight important student comments during discussions.
* Copy of notes prior to class – Since I rely on lip-reading, it is difficult to take extensive notes while listening.
* Group activities in quiet area – Multiple groups working in the same room makes it very difficult for me to hear. I have typically done group work in a hallway or an adjacent room.
* Closed captioning for all audio-visuals.
* Reduce noise levels or reverberation whenever possible. Anything that disrupts a flat hard surface will reduce echo in a classroom. Turn off fans and close door to noisy hall. Carpeting or any type of buffer reduces reverberation.

I look forward to meeting you this week, and I truly appreciate anything you are able to do to make the information more accessible for me. Please let me know if you have any concerns or questions. [INSERT SCHOOL NAME] is the perfect fit for me for so many reasons. With open communication, I am confident that this will be a great academic year!

Sincerely,

Kelin M.