

Loud Noises Hurt My Ears

A free printable social story for ages 3-9

For children with auditory sensitivities, everyday sounds like hand dryers and fire alarms can be genuinely painful, not just annoying. This story validates their experience and teaches self-advocacy tools like headphones and quiet breaks. It is especially helpful for autistic children and those with sensory processing differences.

Some sounds are loud, like hand dryers, alarms, sirens, and big crowds.

My ears work hard, and sometimes loud sounds feel too big.

Lots of kids have sensitive ears. That is okay.

When a sound hurts my ears, I can cover them with my hands.

I can wear my headphones or earmuffs to make sounds softer.

I can tell a grown-up, "Too loud!" and they will help me.

I can move away from the sound or ask for a quiet break.

Most loud sounds end quickly.

Hand dryers stop. Alarms turn off. Trucks drive away.

When the sound stops, my body can feel calm again.

Grown-ups can warn me before a loud sound comes, like before a fire drill.

I know what helps my ears, and I can ask for what I need.

I have good tools, and I can handle loud places a little at a time.

Tips for Reading This Story Together

- Keep noise-reducing headphones in the backpack, the car, and by the door so a tool is always within reach.
- Preview loud environments: watch a video of a hand dryer or a parade at low volume, then raise it gradually.
- Teach and honor the too loud signal everywhere; a child whose signal works will use words instead of panic.
- Scout quieter options: family restrooms often lack dryers, and many venues now offer sensory-friendly hours.

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