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Message from the Editor

HEARSAY is a newsletter for school professionals in Arkansas who are educating students who are deaf/hard of hearing. Each issue will include information, resources, and tips for working with this unique student population. We'd love to hear from you and address topics you suggest. Please email your questions/suggestions to ears@archildrens.org.

Signal-to-Noise Ratio (SNR). It's a term we audiologists love and the more of it the better. Literally. Especially where children are concerned. Our ability to correctly and accurately understand speech in the presence of noise is a function of age, repertoire, and hearing acuity AND it is impacted by noise levels and distance from the speaker of interest. Even with normal hearing, the younger you are the greater the SNR has to be for you to achieve equal performance as an adult. In fact, ASHA (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association), in support of the American National Standards Institute, recommends a +15 dB SNR at the level of the child's ear in all classrooms. Consider the following factors:

- ⇒ Typical teachers' voice = 65-70 dB SPL
- ⇒ Typical classroom noise = 55-75 dB SPL
- ⇒ SNR is the difference between the intended message (teacher's voice) and the background noise (everything else in the classroom). If a teacher's voice measures at 65 dB SPL and the background noise is also at 65 dB SPL, then this results in a 0 dB SNR (not good!).

Research studies have shown that in most classrooms, the teacher's voice is often only as loud as the level of background noise give or take 5 dB. That's not good! But what does that actually sound like? Well, a classroom activity may go a little like this: (Trust me, you'll want to see/hear this!)

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/misunderstoodminds/experiences/attexp2a.html>

The point? Soundfield or classroom amplification systems do make a difference. Teachers' voices aren't always as loud as they might think. These systems help to improve the SNR at the level of the child's ear by evenly distributing the teacher's voice around the classroom. Research studies have concluded that these systems improve SNR, improve educational performance (literacy and standardized test scores), improve student behaviors (e.g., attention), and reduce teacher fatigue and vocal strain.

Outcomes of Children with Hearing Loss (OCHL) Study

Researchers from Boystown, UNC Chapel Hill, and University of Iowa have teamed up to tackle a longitudinal study on the effects of mild-moderate hearing loss and subsequent hearing aid use (or lack thereof). From speech-language outcomes to academic outcomes to psychosocial behaviors, they are looking at it all. What they have found is fascinating. It all boils down to how often the hearing aids are in use and the quality of the hearing aid fitting. Read more at <http://ochlstudy.org> and see the following link for a poster for SLPs:

<http://ochlstudy.org/pdf/Your%20Intervention%20Matters%20Brochure.pdf>

Working with a D/HH student seeking to go to college?

Financial assistance is available in the form of scholarships specifically for students with hearing loss. Check out the links below for more information!

- ◆ <http://www.agbell.org/families/financial-aid/college-scholarships-for-students-offered-through-other-organizations/>
- ◆ <http://www.nationaldeafcenter.org/>
- ◆ www.rit.edu/NTID
- ◆ http://www.washington.edu/doit/sites/default/files/atoms/files/College_Funding_Strategies_0.pdf

EARS Resources

YouTube

Just a reminder to take a look at our YouTube Channel. We have lots of informational video clips which might be helpful to you when working with your students.

<http://tinyurl.com/EARSVideosPlaylist>

HEARSAY

This link will take you to our newsletter, HEARSAY. We typically publish 3-4 issues per year. As new issues are added, you will have access to them via this link.

<https://tinyurl.com/EARSHearSayNewletters>