

Objectives for Session The participant will be able to:

- 1) Relate hearing device use to the schools' responsibility by law and parent rights.
- 2) Describe factors from infancy and the elementary school years that impact resilience and self-esteem.
- 3) Describe actions that can be taken to reduce the likelihood of students resisting or refusing to use hearing devices that are necessary for optimal school outcomes.

Legal Implications Supporting Amplification Use

Schools are required to provide a free and appropriate public education to all students. When the IEP team deems amplification is a necessary prerequisite for FAPE to occur, it is written into the IEP. The ADA and 504 are protections to prevent/avoid discrimination. These consider the level of access, or effectiveness of communication as compared to peers. Ideally, there should be a functional communication/access assessment of every student with hearing loss to determine if they are receiving an equal level of communication/access. If not, and there is an adverse educational impact then an IEP would be developed. If no adverse impact is identified, then a 504 Plan would be developed.

If amplification is in the IEP doesn't the student have to use it?

Technically yes because the IEP is a contract between the school, student, and the student's parents. If the student is noncompliant then technically the school is in violation of the IEP and providing FAPE. If we know that many students are at risk for rejecting amplification, then it makes sense to include provisions within specialized instruction to develop student resilience and skills to help them to cope with issues when their peer group becomes a focus in upper elementary and middle school. If a student is not using amplification, then it needs to be removed from the IEP and the needed accommodations/supports reviewed.

June 2015 Court Case (Detroit): Setting Up an FM system does NOT meet IDEA documentation rules

Audiologist set the FM to meet the student's hearing needs. FM was delivered to the classroom and teacher inserviced. FINDINGS = in addition to providing the equipment. The student needs to know how to operate and maintain it. A district needs to keep records that will corroborate that the FM was available to the student EVERY DAY and whether or not the FM was used. <http://successforkidswithhearingloss.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Setting-up-FM-system-does-not-meet-IDEA-documentation-rules.pdf>. So FM use is on the 'legal radar' and resistance needs to be addressed.

What power/right does the parent have to prevent amplification use in school?

The district has an obligation to inform the parents of their rights including the district's ADA/504 obligation for equal access. If the parent doesn't consent to the district going further, the district's legal obligations will have been fulfilled. For those districts who want to go beyond their minimal obligations, they could proceed to court or file child neglect complaints (very rare). Parents have the right to support their child's success or to support their failure. This includes preventing amplification for a HOH student.

How many, when and why do students reject amplification in school. What do we know?

Phonak 2010 hearing aid data-logging study: Ages infant – 18 years. 40% of children wear hearing aids 4 hours or less. Only 10% achieved full time hearing aid wear. <https://successforkidswithhearingloss.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Phonak-Data-Logging-Study-2010.pdf>

2008 (Franks) study about why students age 8-18 resist wearing FM/DM. No correlation with unilateral/bilateral hearing loss. 53% had social-based reasons for lack of use. 47% rejected hearing devices due to lack of benefit, convenience, comfort issues or teacher resistance – all things that we could possibly improve.

Fall 2016 Children Rejecting Amplification Survey (sponsored by Supporting Success for Children with Hearing Loss)

How many are 'non-users'? So far... 50 survey respondents representing almost 1000 students on their combined caseloads: 11% refused to use hearing aids; 56% usually wore hearing aids (meaning miss zero to an occasional school day); 30% often wore hearing aids (meaning use 3-4x/week); 4% occasionally wore aids (meaning use 1-2x/week).

Who are the most likely 'non-users'?

Those who can 'get by' or 'fake it' without their aids were most likely to be non-users. Children with Moderate-Severe and Severe hearing loss cannot 'pass' as normal hearing without amplification. Students with unilateral loss with a

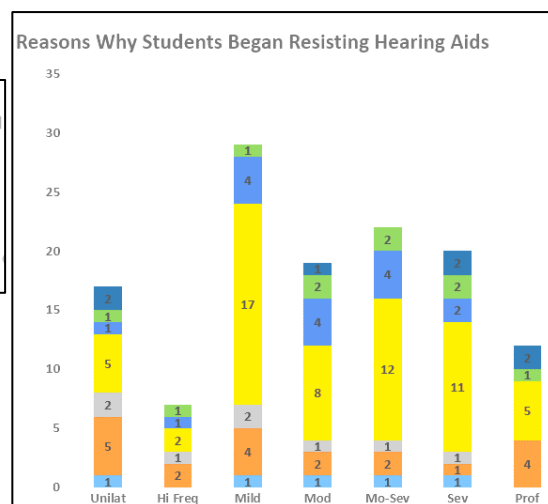
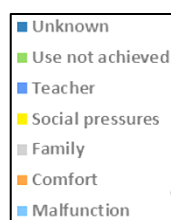
hearing aid in their worse ear were more likely to be non-users (they have enough hearing to still 'know' when sound is on their 'bad side').

When do students typically resist using hearing devices?

Resistance clearly occurs in grades 6-8. Students with unilateral hearing loss resist at any grade. Those with mild loss resist both in early elementary and in middle school. Same for students with severe loss – both mild and severe may choose to go without amplification early on. Students with moderate-severe clearly resist in grade 5, when social cliques and social rejection often occur and moderate hearing loss shadows moderate-severe. The biggest surprise was the large numbers of students with moderate hearing loss who refuse hearing devices but also cannot readily 'pass' in large group listening environments or socially in noise. Severe hearing loss resists in grades 3/4, 7/8, and grade 10 (possibly social and identity issues are raised and raised again at these ages?)

What are reasons why students begin resisting hearing aids?

1. Social issues (most common)
2. Teacher resistance
3. Comfort
4. Family support (lack thereof)
5. Low functioning students to hearing aid use was not achieved
6. Malfunction of hearing aids (least common)



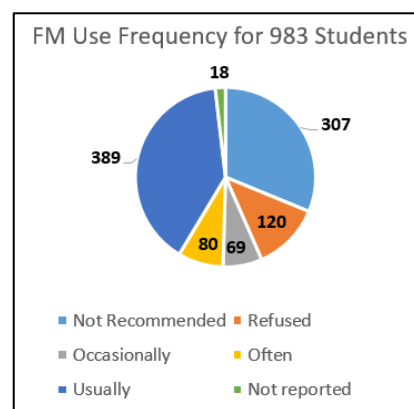
Implications

- Teaching hearing aid independence and self-advocacy skills should be addressing # 2, 3, 6 above.
- Family support needs to be gained early which is difficult when they 'see' their child respond without the hearing aids OR they see no response at all. Need to share functional info. Not easy, but necessary!
- We need to develop student self-confidence, persistence, and recognition of when they are not hearing – EARLY so that they are better able to cope with increasing social pressure in late elementary and middle school.

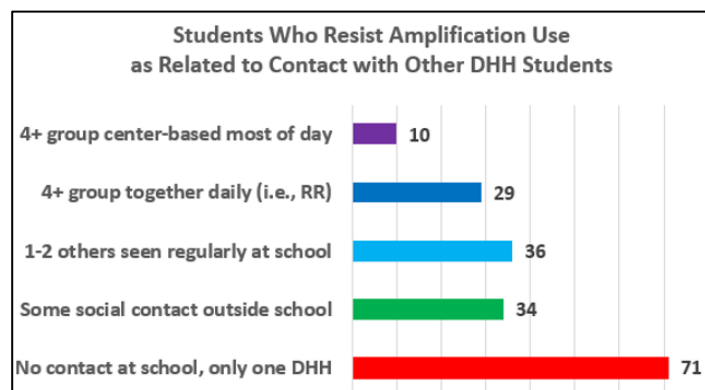
What about resistance of FM/DM (HAT) devices?

31% never had FM recommended (!); 12% refused FM/DM; 40% usually/always use FM; 8% use it often (3-4x/week); 7% use it occasionally (1-2x/week). So...about 1/3 never used it; about 1/2 usually use it; about 1/5 seldom/never use it.

Of the 142 students who are non-users, the results look very similar to children who reject hearing aids. Mainly students with unilateral, mild and moderate hearing loss resist using FM/DM (they think they can 'pass' as normal hearing without it).



How did contact with other DHH students affect the degree of non-use?



'One and onlies' reject amplification at about twice the rate of students who come into contact with other DHH students regularly.

When amplification use is the 'norm' only 1/7 as many students reject amplification.

Fill out the survey so we can expand the pool of respondents and get more accurate data trends!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PZGSNRX>

Why do kids reject amplification? Summary:

- Students use amplification initially because adults tell them they have to and – usually - they know it helps them
- When families are not supportive of amplification, no benefit is experienced or there are comfort issues, we see non-users in PK-2
- When peers are more likely to tease and make ‘differences’ an issue (Grades 4-5) then students often try to ‘pass’ without amplification
- In middle school they ‘know how to get what they need from classes’ and are focused on fitting into their peer group. Often students haven’t formulated long-term goals by then. These together encourage non-use.
- We cannot force them to comply and behavior plans have no long-term benefit.
- Getting students together with others who use hearing devices really helps!

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Different things at different ages! – ESPECIALLY THE EARLY YEARS!

Infants

Attachment style – secure, anxious-avoidant, anxious-resistant – is a strong predictor of child adjustment, peer relationships, and even academic test performance throughout life. Consistent hearing aid use needs to be achieved as early as possible (ideally by 6 months of age) to prevent bonding issues. A strong sense of trust, developed early, can contribute to a sense of security (everything will be okay) even when faced with adversity later in childhood (i.e., peer teasing). Any effort we invest into supporting parent understanding of the need for consistency in communication/hearing is likely to have lifelong payoffs. The first critical goal of early intervention!

Toddlers (18 months-3 years)

Between the ages of 18 months and 3 years the child begins to assert their independence. Families can become overprotective. They may become overly dependent on others, lack self-esteem and feel a sense of shame or doubt in their own abilities. Toddlers need to realize that they must communicate their own wants and needs and be praised for doing so! This builds self-esteem and self-confidence. At about 20 months of age, typically developing children learn to remove their clothing. Often, hearing aids are taken off at this age too as the child practices ‘taking off.’ Soon comes the frustration that accompanies learning to ‘put on.’ By age 2 to 2 ½ we should work with families to support their child in learning, hand-over-hand, how to get their hearing aids up to their ear, tuck in the earmold, and how to put the hearing aid over the back of the ear. Ideally, children will have the skill of putting on their own hearing aids accomplished by the time they are age three, to age four years at the latest.

Early School-Age (4-6) – *Independence & Self-Esteem*

Completing Tasks: As children become preschoolers they develop initiative – how to plan, how to complete tasks from start to finish. In order to complete tasks the child needs to understand: a) What he is supposed to do, b) Have the language comprehension to know how to perform the task. They may feel guilt if their effort does not produce the expected results. Early self-advocacy skills, like asking for help or clarification, can strengthen independence and self-esteem. They need to develop language for better understanding of directions as needed.

“Glance and Get” Pros and Cons

It is common for students to compensate for what they did not hear or understand by looking around and copying what other children are doing. Teachers need to carefully observe (or your class observations) to ensure that a response to directions is at the same rate as peers and not due to ‘copying’. Encourage the student, and the whole class, to ask questions if they are not sure of a direction. Use of HAT is critical to ‘level the playing field’.

Early School-Age (4-6) – *What is Good?*

Children ages 4-6 are developing a sense of judgment. They are actively learning what ‘good’ is from their teacher and peers. When a child attends school it is likely that he or she will be surrounded by children and adults who have NEVER seen a child with hearing devices. These comments occur when a child is learning what peers find acceptable. Without a strong self-concept and practice explaining hearing devices, a child may quickly believe that he is ‘not good’ because of

the hearing devices or, that the hearing devices are not ‘good.’ Early rejection by peers is associated with persistent academic and social difficulties.

Early School-Age (4-6) – Action Items Needed

PreK – Gr 1 are times when a student is at high risk for beginning to develop negative feelings about the hearing devices. It is critical for: a) students to receive instruction and practice in how to answer questions about their hearing loss and hearing devices, b) students to realize that hearing devices are ‘new’ to class peers and that peers do not understand that someone hearing loss, c) does not always hear everything the same way they do, d) students to understand that they ARE missing information because of the hearing loss, not because they are not as smart as the other students.

Early School-Age (4-6) – I don’t know, I didn’t hear it!

It is very important that the children recognize that they have hearing loss. At this age, the child may have little awareness that information is being missed due to hearing issues. Discussing the size of the child’s ‘listening bubble’ and performing the ELFLing procedure (<http://successforkidswithhearingloss.com/tests/>) will assist his understanding of how it is harder for him to hear in relation to distance, noise, speechreading, and knowing the words used. Do so with and then without the hearing devices (hearing aids, FM/DM, cochlear implants).

Early School-Age (4-6) – Action Items Needed: The end goal is to help the child:

- understand that hearing loss means that he will not understand as much as others,
- that hearing devices help him to hear as much as possible like people who do not have hearing loss,
- the hearing loss is neither ‘good’ or ‘bad’, it just is a part of him, &
- that he needs to ‘work to listen’ (listen his best) so that he can understand his best. In other words, he has one more job than his class peers, and that is to be a ‘super listener.’

Early School-Age (4-6) – perspective taking

Perspective is necessary for children with hearing loss because, ironically, they are held accountable for being aware of when they did not hear something (fully/correctly). We need to start working with students early to:

- ‘Get a Clue’ meaning look around themselves to figure out the information missed
- work on Theory of Mind skills so that they are able to take the perspectives of others as a means to guesstimate what information may have been missed or misunderstood
- work on basic listening skill behaviors
- make sure children know that no one is going to ‘spoon feed’ just the ‘important’ information – they are responsible for focusing on communication
- *Monkey Talk Self-Advocacy Game, Teaching the Basics of Theory of Mind; Ask & Answer Social Skills Games* available <http://successforkidswithhearingloss.com/catalog>

Early School-Age (4-6) – remembering what was heard

Subvocalization Skills: Our students do not know what they did not hear because they didn’t hear it. By learning subvocalization skills they can focus on WHAT they heard and remember it. They can then (1) include this information into a communication clarification request or (2) learn to apply their language knowledge to ‘fill in the gaps’. Teaching subvocalization is also practice in perseverance. The characteristic of perseverance, along with age-appropriate self-confidence and self-esteem, are the most powerful factors in resisting the influence of feeling like you are different.

Early School-Age (4-6) – getting along with others

Children need instruction in identifying and explaining feelings. If students with hearing loss are not able to recognize the feelings of others, then early ‘friend making’ will be jeopardized. Direct teaching of ‘being a friend’ is often needed. Direct teach how to appropriately recognize and respond to teasing/bullying.

Early School-Age (4-6) – resilience to teasing needed

Teaching the differences between friendly versus unfriendly teasing and bullying as related to hearing loss and devices. Appropriate ways to respond to comments about hearing loss, sign, hearing devices to inform others (disclosure and sharing communication needs). Teach them to recognize bullying and appropriate responses to these situations.

Address Teasing and Fitting In BEFORE Grade 4 – Wait to Act to Prevent Rejection and you will be Too Late!

Social connections become more important starting in about grade 3 and increasing to cliques by grade 5. Students need to be ready to anticipate that others will tease them. Students need to be ready to respond when others try to isolate or reject them socially. They need to know WHY and that it has little or nothing to do with their hearing loss. Friendship

skills, initiating conversations appropriately and self-advocacy skills need to be strong by about 4th grade. Without these skills students are likely to lack the confidence, have the resilience, or the perseverance to get through the challenging grades 5-7 without rejecting hearing aids.

Later Elementary Years (7-11 years) The Power of Industry

During this stage, children are capable of learning, creating and accomplishing numerous new skills and knowledge, thus developing a sense of industry. This is also a very social stage of development. As the world expands a bit, the most significant relationships for children in grades 2-5 are with the school and neighborhood. Parents are no longer the complete authorities they once were, although they are still important.

Later Elementary Years – building perseverance

Grit is a disposition to pursue very long-term goals with passion and perseverance. Students with high levels of grit are more successful in both academic and non-academic pursuits. At the foundation of perseverance is optimism that a goal can be achieved or the challenge overcome. Discuss the IEP and having the student select their 'own goal' and how it can be accomplished. Goal-setting using a student-selected IEP goal is an easy way to encourage this development.

Later Elementary Years – build confidence

Industry vs Inferiority – Build confidence in student understanding abilities. A follow-up to sub-vocalization is the skill of chunking information. *Chunking* refers to grouping things together. In this case, teaching the child not only how to chunk pieces of auditory information, but also which words to select. It aids in more effective understanding. Strong strategies to deal with challenging situations increase feelings of control and confidence and more resilience when they occur.

Later Elementary Years – build resilience

Teach how to manage negative situations via positive self-talk. Positive self-talk can help children to build self-esteem and confidence. they have regular contact with others who use hearing devices they can strategize/commiserate together. Then think about "What would Justin do?" Kool Kidz Vidz can provide some examples too.

Middle School & High School (12-19 years) Developing Their Identity

An adolescent must struggle to discover and find his or her own identity, while negotiating and struggling with social interactions and "fitting in," while developing a sense of right from wrong.

Middle School & High School Realities

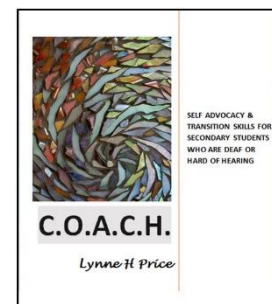
- **If we want to see students continue to use their hearing aids/ FM systems into secondary school then we need to act EARLY.** It cannot wait until they enter secondary school.
- Without coming into contact with other students who use hearing devices (like theirs) it is not possible to develop a healthy identity as 'an okay kid that happens to have a hearing loss'
- Students who have resilience, perseverance, strong self-esteem and confidence are much less likely to reject hearing aids due to peer pressure to 'fit in'. These characteristics are developed from an early age.

Middle School & High School – What we CAN do

COACH the secondary student to:

- Realize their own goals
- Recognize their own challenges as related to their hearing loss
- Develop the skills to weigh their options for responding to the challenges
- Understand the consequences for their responses and how they relate to their goals

If you want to hear more about this, attend the session: *Situational Analysis and Self-Advocacy Skill Development for Secondary Students with Hearing Loss*



C.O.A.C.H.: Self-Advocacy and Transition Skills for Secondary Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

<http://successforkidswithhearingloss.com/c.o.a.c.h./>