



May is National Speech-Language-Hearing Month. This month is dedicated to educating others about the importance of human communication, as well as what we can all do to prevent and address communication disorders.

A speech-language pathologist treats disorders relating to speech and language. Speech is our ability to produce sounds using the mouth, lips, and tongue. Language is our ability to use and put words together to express meaning and to understand what others say. The following are signs of possible delays in speech and language in children:



- Does not smile or interact with others (birth and older).
- Does not babble (4–6 months).
- Makes only a few sounds or gestures, like reaching (7–9 months).
- Does not understand what others say (10 months – 2 years).
- Says only a few words (19 months – 2 years).
- Does not put words together to make sentences (19 months – 3 years).
- Speaks using words that are not easily understood by others (3–4 years).
- Has trouble with early reading skills, like pretending to read or finding the front of a book (4–5 years).

An audiologist is an expert who helps to prevent, diagnose, and treat hearing disorders for people of all ages. Children who pass their newborn hearing screening may acquire or develop hearing loss later in childhood due to noise exposure, illnesses, or other reasons. The following are signs of hearing loss in children:

- Does not alert to sound (birth-3 months).
- Does not respond when you call their name (7-9 months).
- Does not follow simple directions (13-18 months).
- Shows delays in speech & language development (birth-3 years).
- Pulls or scratches at their ears.
- Has difficulty achieving academically.
- Is socially isolated and unhappy in school.

Hearing loss is also a common problem adults experience as they age. Signs of hearing loss for adults could include the following:

- Hearing ringing, roaring, or beeping in one/both ears.
- Not responding to spoken words.
- Having persistent ear discomfort after exposure to loud noise.
- Having muffled hearing.
- Experiencing constant frustration trying to hear speech and other sounds.
- Avoiding conversation.
- Experiencing social isolation.
- Experiencing depression.

If you notice any of these warning signs in yourself, family members, or others, please contact Easterseals Western and Central Pennsylvania, Johnstown Division at (814)-535-5508.