



May, 2016

Dear Parents/Teachers

During May, the professional association—the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)—celebrates Better Hearing & Speech Month. Given that, we want to take this opportunity to remind you of the important roles that verbal communication and personal interaction play in children’s academic and social development. The primary way young children develop their speech and language abilities is through verbal exchange—talking and reading with parents. This is a precursor for their own reading abilities and overall academic success. Children also learn from hands-on experiences. Educational apps using technology can play a part in this development, but does not take the place of verbal interactions.

Another issue related to technology use is hearing damage. Unfortunately, there has been a significant spike in hearing loss in young people in recent years. This coincides with the rise in popularity of mp3 players, tablets, and other devices. Even mild hearing loss can lead to reduced academic achievement (particularly in reading and math), poor self-concept, and feelings of social isolation, among other consequences—so, encourage your children to keep the volume on their devices to half level and to take listening breaks. Hearing loss due to unsafe listening habits can be prevented, but once it occurs, it is irreversible. Teach these good habits early.

Finally, this is an opportunity to remind you about the school district’s availability should you have any concerns about your child’s communication development. Speech, language, and hearing disorders are among the most common disorders in school-aged children. Communication disorders are also treatable and some can even be prevented if identified early. Should you have any concerns or questions, please contact your school for the speech, language, and/or hearing services available to all students.

Reference: American Speech and Hearing Association