

Program Updates

Trends in Hearing Technology Use and Parent Education Parent-and-Me Class Supporting Strong Outcomes for Preschool Students

Collaboration among professionals helps us identify the factors that contribute to positive outcomes for children and families. During a recent team discussion, Dr. Kim Wolfert, audiologist for our preschool & primary school and Riley Children's Health, noted that children enrolled in our younger preschool classrooms that previously attended the Little HEARoes parent-and-child class demonstrated higher hearing technology wear time based on weekly data logging reports. When discussing possible reasons for this trend, Little HEARoes Lead Teacher, Meg Perria, highlighted how the unique benefits of the program could be playing an important role.

Our Little HEARoes toddler class emphasizes caregiver participation in all classroom activities, supported by real-time coaching from a Listening and Spoken Language Specialist (LSLS) Certified teacher. This model complements the individualized services families receive through our St. Joseph First Steps providers. Caregivers learn about classroom acoustics, the importance of using remote microphone (DM) systems in noisy environments, and evidence-based listening and spoken language strategies that help support their child's development.



Early Intervention Specialist Meg Perria (right) leads a Little HEARoes class.

In addition to gaining knowledge and skills, families build meaningful connections with one another through the program. They share experiences, resources, practical tips, and encouragement, creating a supportive community focused on helping children succeed. Together, these factors contribute to increased daily hearing technology wear time. When families feel supported, empowered, and equipped with the tools they need, children are more likely to consistently access sound and develop age-appropriate listening and spoken language skills.

This continuum of services, from early intervention through preschool, is making a positive impact on hearing technology use and supporting stronger developmental outcomes for our 3-year-old students.

Serving Students Across the Midwest and Beyond School-Age LSL Services Available in Seven States

Through our in-person and iHear teletherapy services, St. Joseph provides support to school-age students across four states. In addition, our partner provider network, which connects us to highly qualified Listening and Spoken Language Specialists, currently spans four states and continues to grow. According to Senior Director of Programs Bailey Clay, "Professionals in the Listening and Spoken Language community are



More than 145 children access our School-Age services each year.

taking notice of our innovative and collaborative service delivery model for school-age students. As a result, LSL professionals from outside our organization are actively seeking opportunities to partner and collaborate with us to expand access to high-quality services for children and families."

This growing network of partnerships allows St. Joseph to extend specialized expertise to more students across the country while maintaining the high-quality, family-centered services that are at the heart of our mission.

Expanding St. Joseph Programs Through Clinical Partnerships WashU Medicine Collaboration Provides On-Site Clinical Audiology Services

St. Joseph Hearing + Speech has long held great respect for the audiology team at WashU Medicine and was thrilled to begin working with their providers. Since the collaboration began in late 2025, 12 St. Joseph children have been fit with hearing technology through our Hear It Begins program or Missouri First Steps services.



Our collaboration with WashU supports children like A'ysia.

This partnership is helping ensure that children with hearing loss and their families receive timely, coordinated care while strengthening collaboration between audiology and Listening and Spoken Language (LSL) professionals. "Through our strong partnership with WashU Medicine Otolaryngology, children with hearing loss receive timely evaluations, family counseling, and hearing technology fittings that help jumpstart their LSL journey," shares MO Campus Coordinator Audrey Nemeth. "Together, we ensure families have access to expert care and support from the very beginning."