

WELCOME

Welcome to the Southwark Hearing Support Service (SHSS) 2021 Spring One Newsletter. In this issue we introduce two mums whom have started a Facebook group for Southwark parents with deaf children. We also talk about LING sounds and how you can use them with your child.



CONNECTING SOUTHWARK PARENTS WITH DEAF CHILDREN VIA FACEBOOK

Two mums in Southwark have got together and started a Facebook group for other parents in the borough. It is a place where you can share stories, find information, ask advice and connect with other parents of deaf children and young people.

Nicola and Silvie met through the school where their children attend. The school is St John's and St Clement's Primary School with a resource base provision for deaf children. Nicola has a 10 year old daughter who wears hearing aids, Silvie has a 9 year old daughter who has cochlear implants and a 6 year old son who wears hearing aids.

Through many meet ups and chats about their own children they decided that it would be good to speak to a wider group. The first step has been to set up their own Facebook Group called **Southwark Deaf Children's Group** in association with National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS). It currently has 7 members in the group but they would really love to increase this number and get as many Southwark parents as possible to join. The more in the group the more opportunities to share experiences and gain knowledge from each other. It can provide a platform for idea sharing and identify needs of families in Southwark with deaf children.

Another project the women are working on is to set up a charity called **Sound Waves Foundation** to help create positive futures for deaf children and young people in society. Firstly, they want to raise money to provide speech to text captioning so that deaf children do not miss a thing in their learning. This software will be loaded onto devices at home and for schooling. Secondly, they want a major rebrand to change the views and language associated with deafness. For example words like 'suffer from', 'loss' and 'impairment' do not empower and embolden the children – why shouldn't it be called 'deaf gain' and 'deafability'.

When speaking to Nicola and Silvie they talk of how deafness is viewed as a barrier, but they want people to look at the positives and celebrate what deaf children and young people can and really do achieve. Having access to deaf role models is so important and this would be a part of the work the charity would do. Showing not just the parents but also the children and young people themselves what they are capable of achieving.

If any of this has sparked your interest please do look up the group on Facebook and join. If you don't have Facebook and are interested in the projects that Nicola and Silvie are working on do get in touch with us at Southwark Hearing Support Service and we can let them know.

LING SOUNDS TEST

A simple and effective test of hearing that can be performed daily

The Ling Sounds test was developed by Daniel Ling in 1976. This test is used to check how well children with hearing loss can access the sounds of speech with and without amplification e.g. hearing aids or cochlear implant. The sounds: OOO/MMM, SSS/SHH, AAA/EEE (used in pairs for testing) fall across all speech frequencies, so are best to test access to speech sounds without extensive and lengthy testing.

How to carry out the Ling Sounds test at home?

There are two ways of using the Ling Sounds test at home:

- 1) For daily checks of hearing aids using a stetoclip. Say the sounds with the microphone of the hearing aid at the same distance (a phone hands distance away from mouth). Check for clarity of sounds – any distortions? If you do this test daily it will be easier to detect any distortions.
- 2) As a listening game with a child using visual cards or toys – it can be used for all audiological equipment, including FM systems. You could even do it as you leave the front door in the morning.

All Ling Sounds have corresponding pictures or toys that match each sound: OOO is often a ghost or a monkey, MMM is an ice-cream (or another tasty snack), SHH a sleeping baby, SSS a snake, AAA an aeroplane and EEE a mouse. It's important that everyone who works with a child uses the same pictures or toys. Begin by teaching your child the pictures/toys and corresponding sounds. You can use the sign and the word. You could start by using two contrasting sounds (e.g. ooo/sss) and build up as the child gets more confident. Practising this will be important in making the test work.

When you do the test make sure your child is wearing their personal amplification equipment. Then, using a clear voice ask your child to point to or pick up the corresponding picture/toy. When you test make sure that your child cannot see your face as to not give them any visual clues. Standing/sitting behind them works well. This helps to make the results a true representation of just what your child hears.

What can the Ling Sound tell you?

When the child is used to the test and responds accurately to all the sounds and one day confuses them. This can indicate a number of other things:

- the batteries on the hearing aids, processors on the cochlear implant or FM system are flat
- the equipment may be faulty and therefore contact audiology for advice
- if the equipment is tested and found to be working well but the child still confuses the sound, it may indicate a change in the child's hearing levels

Changes in hearing levels are not always permanent – they may happen at times of colds and infections when ears often get blocked. Understanding that the child has a fluctuating hearing loss is important not only for parents but even more so for teachers in school so they can be mindful of the hearing needs of your child changing and be able to address that accordingly.

The simplicity of the test, its adaptability and ability to administer it without bulky equipment means that it can provide a good first indication that audiological equipment is working well or hearing levels have changed. Though limited to six sounds, this test can also provide information about which areas of frequency the child may need more support with. Alongside all these benefits is the added knowledge that this test is free to use by all. Not bad in these days of tight budgets.

A REMINDER OF HOW TO GET IN CONTACT WITH US

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**SOUTHWARK HEARING
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