



## May is Better Hearing and Speech Month!



### Eye opening facts about communication disorders:

- Approximately 40 million Americans have some kind of communication disorder
- By the first grade, roughly 5% of children have noticeable speech disorders
- 3 million+ Americans stutter
- 6–8 million Americans have some form of language impairment
- Approximately 1 million Americans suffer from aphasia
- The Centers for Disease Control estimate the lifetime costs for all people with hearing loss born in the year 2000 will total \$2.1 billion. Most of these costs will come from lost wages due to inability or limited ability to work

Adapted from [asha.org](http://asha.org) (2018)

May is a month to bring recognition and raise awareness about communication disorders and the roles professionals have in diagnosing and treating them. It is known as “better hearing and speech month” (BHSM). This year’s theme is “communication for all.”

The power of communication is something that may be taken for granted. Imagine if you couldn’t tell someone that you felt sick or that you were hurt or injured. Or imagine if you weren’t able to participate in class or even gossip with your friends.

Something as simple as telling someone you love them may be difficult! This is the case for many adults and children (about 40 million!). We encourage parents, caregivers, health providers, teachers, and anyone else that may be in an adult or child’s life to learn and know the warning signs of communication disorders in order to provide them with the services and instruction they need. Here are some the warning signs for all areas impacting communication:

### Language Disorders

- Does not smile or interact with others (birth and older)
- Does not babble (4–7 months)
- Makes only a few sounds or gestures, like pointing (7–12 months)
- Does not understand what others say (7 months–2 years)
- Says only a few words (12–18 months)
- Words are not easily understood (18 months–2 years)
- Does not put words together to make sentences (1.5–3 years)
- Has trouble playing and talking with other children (2–3 years)
- Has trouble with early reading and writing skills (2½–3 years)

### Speech Sound Disorders

- Says *p, b, m, h,* and *w* incorrectly in words (1–2 years)
- Says *k, g, f, t, d,* and *n* incorrectly in words (2–3 years)
- Produces speech that is unclear, even to familiar people (2–3 years)

### Stuttering

- Repeats first sounds of words—“b-b-b-ball” for “ball”
- Speech breaks while trying to say a word—“-----boy” for “boy”
- Stretches sounds out—“ffffff-farm” for “farm”
- Shows frustration when trying to get words out

### Voice Disorders

- Consistently having a hoarse or breathy voice
- Consistently having a nasal-sounding voice or hyponasal voice (like when you have a cold)

### Hearing Loss

- Shows a lack of attention to sounds (birth–1 year)
- Does not respond when you call their name (7 months–1 year)
- Does not follow simple directions (1–2 years)
- Shows delays in speech and language development (birth–3 years)
- Pulls or scratches at their ears
- Has difficulty achieving academically, especially in reading and math
- Is socially isolated and unhappy at school
- Has persistent ear discomfort after exposure to loud noise (regular and constant listening to electronics at high volumes)

Adapted from [asha.org](http://asha.org) (2018)

As noted above, many of these communication impairments can be detected at a young age, and therefore, treated at a young age. Parents, caregivers, teachers, and other professionals can prevent further difficulty with communication if they seek help early on! If you observe any of the above signs, have your child evaluated by a professional in the field. Children ages birth-3 can receive free services through a program known as Early Intervention (EI). Massachusetts Family Ties is a great resource for these services organized by town/region (catchment areas) <https://massfamilyties.org/ei/eicity.php>

If your child is older than three and no longer qualifies for EI, have the child evaluated by professionals in the public school or through private means. If you send a written request to the school requesting an evaluation, the school is mandated to follow an IEP timeline (attached to the newsletter). If the child qualifies, the school is required to provide all appropriate services to assist the child in succeeding in school.



### Apraxia Awareness Month

The month of May is also Apraxia Awareness month! On May 14<sup>th</sup> show your support and help raise awareness by wearing something blue and posting pictures on social media to document your support.

Childhood Apraxia of Speech (CAS) is a neurological speech disorder that makes it difficult for children to accurately plan and program the underlying movements required for clear speech (adapted from [apraxia-kids.org](http://apraxia-kids.org)).

The following are the 3 key characteristics and diagnostic markers of CAS:

- Inconsistent errors on consonants and vowels in repeated productions of syllables or words
- Lengthened and disrupted articulatory transitions between sounds and syllables (the speech sounds halted/segmented).
- Inappropriate prosody (rise & fall of the voice and syllable stress).

“Children suspected of having CAS are referred to an SLP [speech-language pathologist] for a comprehensive assessment. [...] Children with CAS benefit from frequent and intensive speech and language therapy to help with the development of the motor plans involved in movements of speech.”  
([www.asha.org](http://www.asha.org))

\*\*\*\*Please Join Us\*\*\*\*

### **Boston Walk for Apraxia**

**Sunday August 5, 2018 @ Braintree High School**  
Show your support this month by signing up for the annual Walk for Apraxia (Register at: [www.apraxia-kids.org](http://www.apraxia-kids.org)). There will be snacks, raffle prizes, a silent auction, and plenty of other activities for the whole family!! This event is open to all. Come out and enjoy the day with us!



## LET'S TALK AT EDAVILLE



Let's Talk enjoyed a beautiful day at Edaville Family Theme Park participating in their Autism Awareness event! There were vendors from all over offering resources/services for individuals with autism. Parents and caregivers were welcome to visit the tables, learn about the products/services, and ask questions. We loved seeing kids of all ages and abilities enjoy the attractions and rides!

Thank you for reading our Let's Talk Newsletter! We appreciate your feedback about additional events, resources, advice, and information you may have. In addition, we welcome recommendations about the content of the newsletter.

Please email: [nscalera@ltspeech.com](mailto:nscalera@ltspeech.com) with suggestions/comments/concerns.



### Chocolates for a good cause!

Let's Talk is selling Hilliard's Chocolate candy bars to fundraise for this year's Boston Walk for Children with Apraxia of Speech! There are 5 flavors: milk chocolate crispy, pure rich milk chocolate, milk chocolate with caramel, milk chocolate with peanut butter, and pure rich dark chocolate. Each candy bar is \$2.00 and all proceeds go to this amazing cause! Ask Marcia, Brenda, or Hannah at the desk if you'd like to purchase any chocolates!

#### **\*\*Reminders\*\***

We are **CLOSED** on the following holidays:

- Memorial day 5/28/18

**\*\*We are open the rest of the week!**

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