

# OVERCOMING SOCIAL DEAFNESS

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THE RIVER SCHOOL



## Social Deafness

According to Punch and Hyde 2010

- “Children with hearing loss are at major disadvantage in situations that are difficult for them to hear or lip read; this has been termed “social deafness” (Vonen, 2007).”
- Children who are implanted early and score within normal ranges in speech and language testing, continue to struggle socially.
- Social deafness impacts social interactions such as play and conversations with peers.
- Social deafness impacts classroom learning, particularly with current teaching practices that incorporate inquiry and project based cooperative learning.

- Social deafness is likely to impact classroom learning that incorporates high levels of student-student dialogue in which there is a negotiation and a division of tasks within a group.

## Effects of Social Deafness

- “Social interaction contributes to learning.” (Anita, S. D., et al, 2018)
- Teachers see children with hearing loss making friends without understanding full impact of social deafness. (Punch and Hyde, 2010)
- The more social acceptance, the more experience with typical hearing peers, the higher social and academic success achieved. (Mellon et al, 2016)
- Students with more social acceptance and more friends have higher academic achievement. (Waxler and Knorr, 2008)
- Learning how to interact with peers at a young age affects their overall academic achievement. (DeLuca and Girolametto, 2011)

## The River School

- Inclusive Model
- Thematic Curriculum
- Individualized Instruction
- Co-Teaching – Master’s level Educator and Speech and Language Pathologist in every class
- Sound Field Systems in all classes
- Targeted phonological awareness & literacy program
- Small class sizes
- Ratio 10:2 – 10 typically hearing peers, 2 children with hearing loss
- Biannual Speech and Language testing
- ACCSEL – Social Emotional Learning curriculum
- Parent Support Group (“Sound Support”)
- Related Services – Pull out speech,
- Occupational Therapy, Audiology, Psychology
- PCIT Interventions – Parent-Child Interaction Therapy
- TCIT –Teacher –Child Interaction Training
- Parent-Infant Program
- Advocacy and Outreach
- Exposure to the arts and sciences – Art, Drama, Music, and Science classes

## River School Model

Innovative and inclusive program, educating children with hearing loss, who have access to sound from the use of hearing aids or cochlear implants, alongside typically hearing peers, from birth through third grade.



## Thematic Curriculum

“The thematic approach involves the incorporation of all developmental domains and academic curricular areas into one common topic.” (Mellon et al 2016)

- Target child interest to increase engagement and maximize learning potential
- Learn from teachers during direct teaching times and from peers or adults through indirect or incidental learning

## Co-Teaching

“A co-teaching model, where the educator and SLP plan together, allows the team to easily and seamlessly weave speech and language goals into the students’ academic goals. The result is a classroom that promotes strong communication skills, fosters developing academic skills, and builds a sense of community.” (Mellon et al, 2016)

- Teachers with two different disciplines working to foster social skills and encourage meaningful peer interactions, as well as use and apply their individual expertise to support language and social development in a fun learning environment.

## Reciprocal Social Interaction

“Young children’s successful engagement in peer interaction is reported to provide significant contributions to children’s social, emotional, communicative, and academic development.” (DeLuca, J. & Girolametto, L., 2011)

- Although a significant amount of attention is placed on language development, “when will my child talk,” developing social skills is as significant as an indicator for success, and often less emphasized.
- Children with hearing loss need practice reading social cues or will have difficulty with this in the future.

## Inclusion

“To learn effectively, children with hearing loss need to develop the necessary skills to participate with peers and learn as members of a community.” (Mellon et al 2016)

- Without practice learning along side typical hearing peers, they will have difficulty managing cooperative, inquiry or project based learning later in school.
- Opportunity to generalize skills, play, share and negotiate in real time with typically hearing peers.
- Building cooperative play and cooperative learning skills at a young age.

## Teaching Self-Advocacy

“Social-cognitive theories suggest that the locus of social learning occurs during multiple encounters with other children (siblings or peers). Under the supervision of adults, social strategies (e.g., access, negotiation, conflict resolution, compromise, discourse adjustments) are practiced and consolidated during increasingly complex social pretend play.” (DeLuca & Girolametto, 2011)

- Real time experiences, with teacher modeling or prompts if needed, provide children with hearing loss practice learning social skills in a safe and supportive environment.

- Children with hearing loss need direct teaching or modeling of social interaction and advocacy in order to hone the skills necessary to be a full member of the general education classroom.

## Mission Statement

The River School’s inclusive program challenges each child to work collaboratively, to think critically, and to develop the confidence to take risks, embrace their curiosity, and find their voice.



## Impact on School Readiness

Children with hearing loss enter a school age education classroom with...

- Experience with reciprocal social interactions
- Experience negotiating with peers
- Experience with self-advocacy
- Experience listening in a variety of environments
- Experience reading social cues
- Experience with turn-taking
- Experience learning cooperatively

School age children with the skills needed to learn and socialize with typical hearing peers, and inevitably a decrease the impact of social deafness



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## Further Information

For further information contact Nancy Mellon, nmellon@riverschool.net or Melissa Meck, mmeck@riverschool.net. More information about The River School can be obtained at www.riverschool.net.

## Disclosure

Melissa Meck and Nancy Mellon are employed by The River School.