

SELF-ADVOCACY SKILLS

LSL Teacher Perceptions: Preschool through Third - Grade

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“Children with hearing loss should learn that they have a right and responsibility to access the same educational and social experiences as their peers.”

INTRODUCTION

Self-advocacy is an essential component of social-emotional skill development. For children who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH), self-advocacy is considered especially critical, as the broader population is not always understanding of their needs. Regardless of the severity of loss, all children who are DHH need to demonstrate the ability to

self-advocate across settings and may require additional support in developing these skills. Age-appropriate self-advocacy skills can and should be introduced within early intervention home-based programs and within the preschool classroom to establish the foundation for future growth and development.

METHODS

A self-advocacy ratings questionnaire for young children who are DHH was developed and distributed to preschool through third-grade listening & spoken language teachers.

Participants included 12 teachers who offered their perceptions on the self-advocacy skills of their students with hearing loss (n = 64).

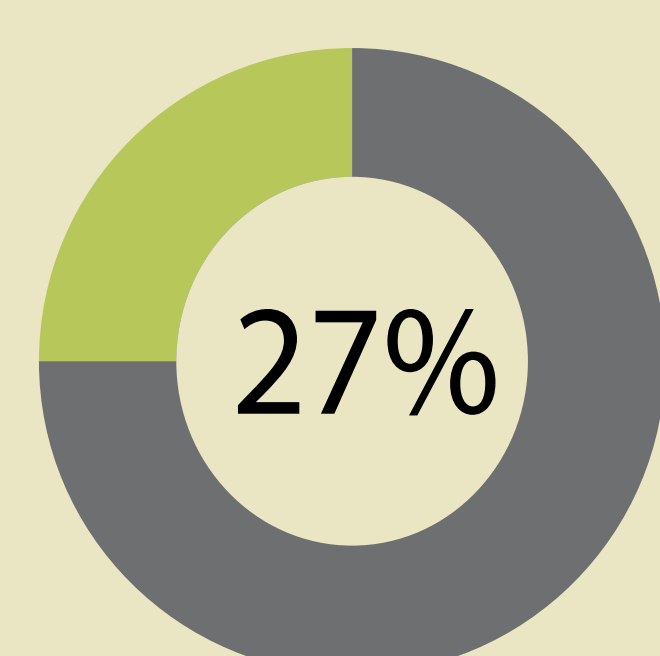
Teachers completed both quantitative and qualitative survey components that revealed information on:

- student skill level in hearing technology management, social and academic self-advocacy skills and proactive listening.
- frequency and type of self-advocacy goals listed in student Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)
- self-advocacy skills taught within the classroom
- impact of self-advocacy skill level on academic and social/emotional development
- teacher recommendations for fostering self-advocacy skill development.

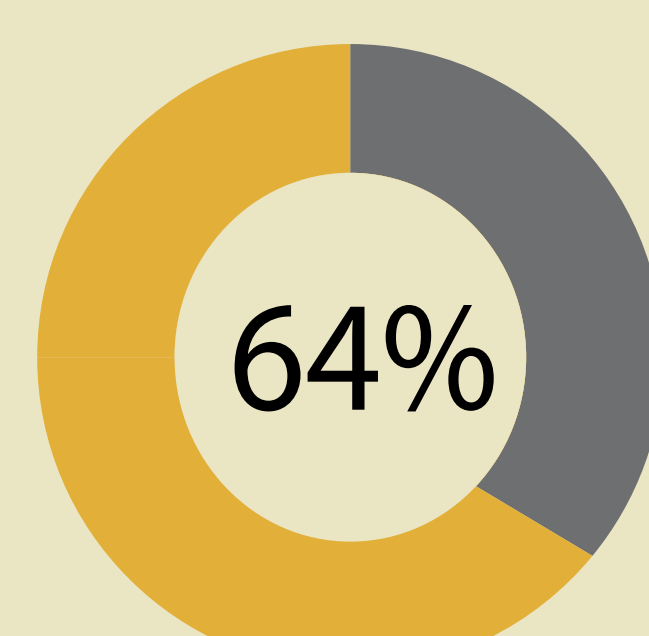
RESULTS

Teacher perceptions of skill level increased from preschool to kindergarten across all three self-advocacy priority areas (see inset).

Skill level was generally higher in areas of self-advocacy that required a lower level of skill. Skills that required higher levels of responsibility, greater expressive communication or interaction with others were identified as general areas of weakness.



of students were reported to have self-advocacy goals written in their IEPs.



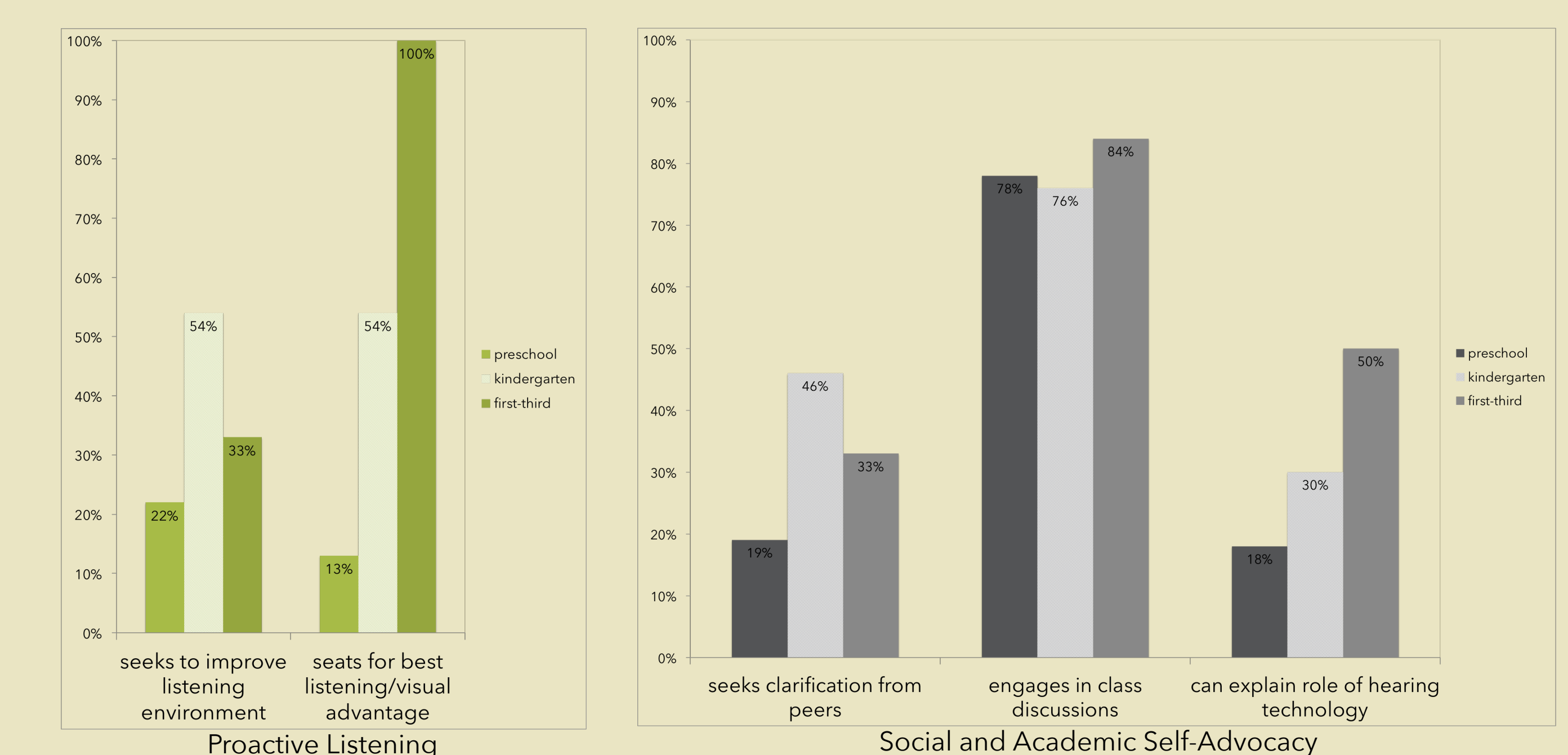
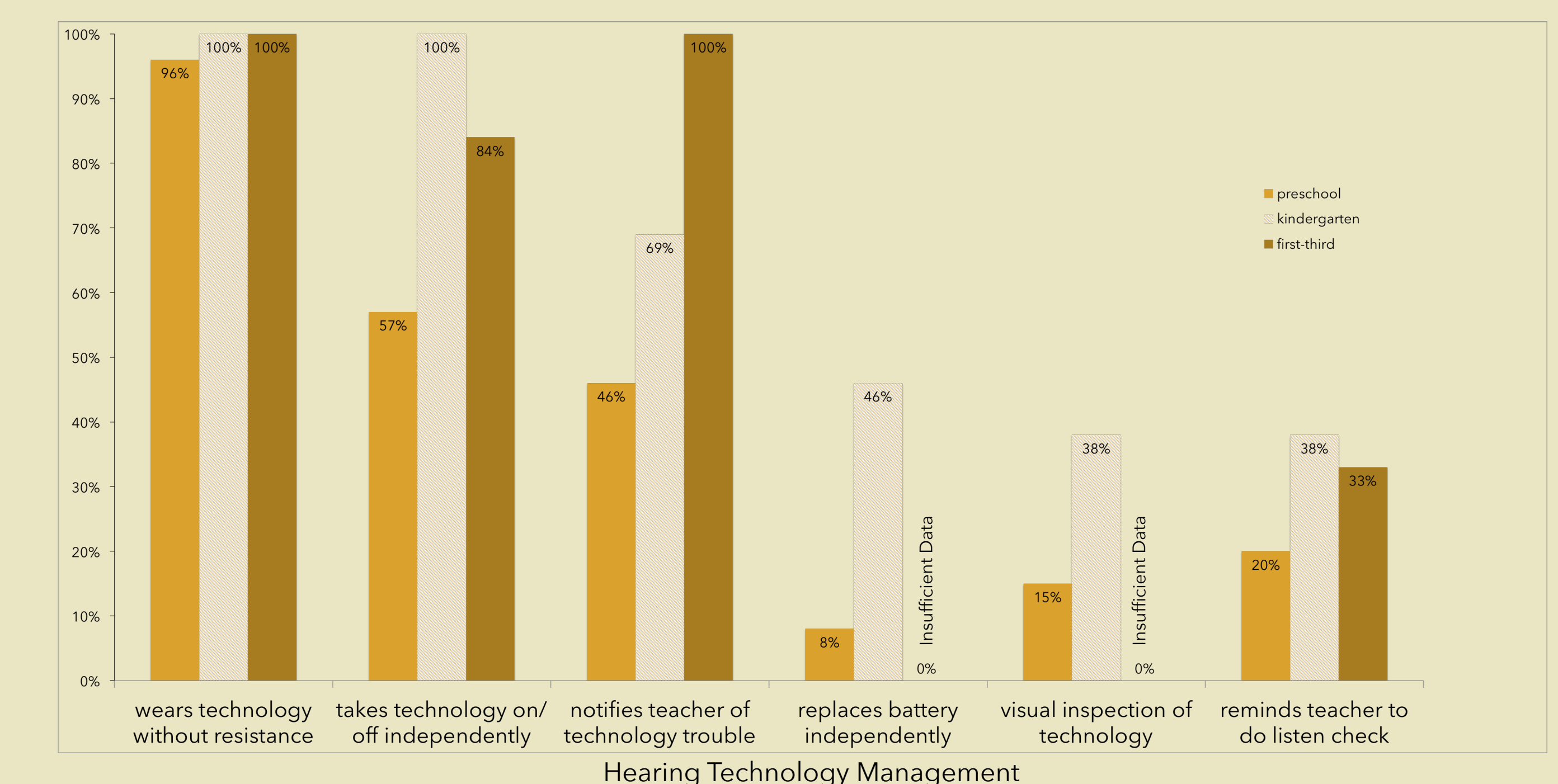
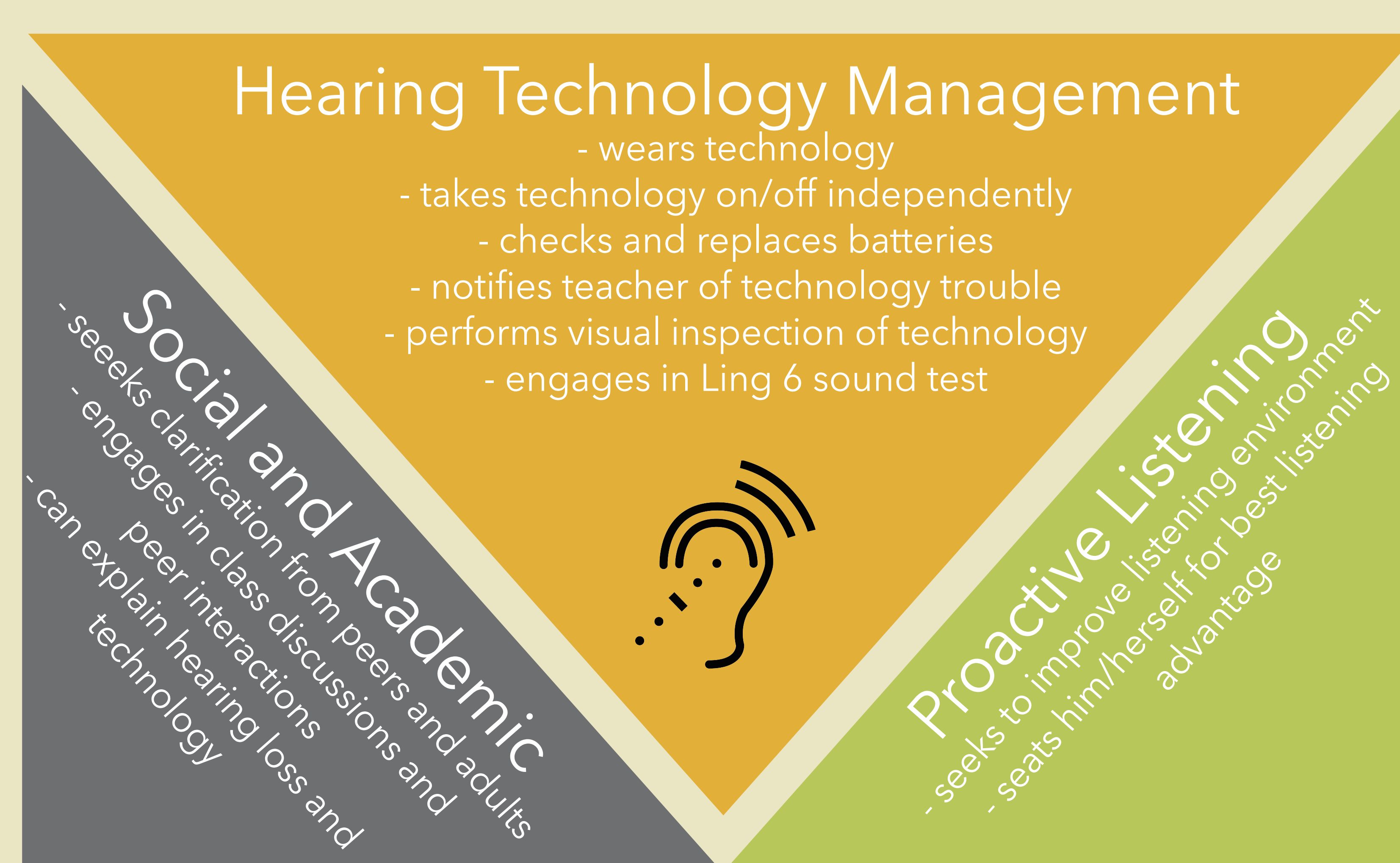
of students experienced negative effects on their academic and social/emotional development as a direct result of their self-advocacy skills.

For teachers who incorporated self-advocacy skills into their classroom instruction, a majority indicated that they focused on skills that required a lower level of responsibility or technical skill (e.g., consistent wearing of hearing technology, taking technology on/off), while very few identified more difficult skills as part of their curriculum (e.g., FM system responsibility, visual inspection of technology).

SKILL LEVELS

The following graphs indicate the frequency that each skill was mostly or always exhibited across age-groups:

SELF-ADVOCACY IN CHILDREN WITH HEARING LOSS



RECOMMENDATIONS

Children benefit when teachers foster age-appropriate self-advocacy skill development in their students across all self-advocacy priority areas and remain mindful that the level of self-advocacy skills attained in early childhood serve as a foundation for later success.

Children benefit when teachers utilize proper tools to identify areas of weakness in their students' level of self-advocacy skills and consciously incorporate them into IEP goal development and classroom instruction.