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EHDI - PARIS

APPS FOR KIDS (AND ADULTS) WITH HEARING LOSS

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>> TINA CHILDRESS: I wasn't sure if I was going to get it up in time because I was working at 12:30 last night. I made a Google Drive, but it should be in the app because I got it to the tech guys this morning, but I also put it up here in case you need to access it.

We'll be starting in about six minutes.

>> TINA CHILDRESS: There's four seats available at the front. There's two up here ‑‑ I'm sorry, there's one seat available up here, two seats ‑‑ if you have an open chair next to you, could you please raise your hand?

Thank you.

Okay, I am going to start, because 25 minutes is not a lot of time and I want to go ahead and get you this information. Good afternoon, everybody!

My name is Tina Childress, and I get to talk to you guys today about apps.

So, the handouts are available, should be available on the app or the website or wherever they post it. I also put it on a Google Drive, so if you ‑‑ either way, you can do it off the Google Drive or you can do it through the apps. So I'm going to go forward so we can finish.

So I get to talk to you about apps today. A little about me...

I am an outreach trainer for the Illinois School for the Deaf Outreach Program. I also work part time for our mainstream school program. I am an educational audiologist by trade. I do a lot of public speaking. I used to work for a cochlear implant company. I am also a late‑deafened adult. I have bilateral cochlear implants, and before the parents ask me, where did I go to school, how did I learn to talk like this, I was 29 years old when I lost my hearing. I was already an audiologist. Just a warning... it's contagious. Be careful.

I am also a signer, so I'm grateful for the access that we have here with our interpreters and the captioning. One of my nicknames is Techy Tina. If there is a gadget out there I probably have it in a bag. I'm also a bag lady.

I love to share information. You can find me on Facebook. I'm pretty open about stuff. I also have like a not ‑‑ not a personal one. It's called See Hear Communication Matters.

And I'll talk to you about my app list today.

So, first, let's talk about accessibility.

Now, with this presentation, I am going to talk about not only Apple devices or iOS, but also Android devices. Because we're seeing a lot of people using both. So let's see... for those of you that do therapy with kids, how many of you use an iOS or an Apple device?

Okay. How many use Android devices?

A few. How many personally have an Apple device, like iPhone or iPad?

Okay. Apple stockholder, thank you very much.

Android devices?

So we're just seeing this. So when I first started creating resources, I started out doing Apple devices because that's what we see in special education. And then people were saying, how about Android? More and more people are getting Android. So I'm starting to address that as well.

So what are the accessibility options that are available on both platforms for our kiddos and adults that are deaf or hard of hearing?

Well, of course, we have different facing camera, which has been available now for many years. I think iPad 1 was the only iPad that does not have a front‑facing camera. I am grateful for the front‑facing camera for doing things like FaceTiming with my children and husband. My mom, who just got hearing aids loves to FaceTime, because she got hearing aids that connect to her iPad, but she hasn't figured out the big white button is not the camera, so all I see is this...

[ Laughter ]

And I'm trying to get her to look over at the camera, because I can't lipread her. Because all I see is this...

Video relay, I love the fact that I can participate in a conference call and have an interpreter available to me on my iPad right next to me. Of course, it's great for lipreading. You don't have to be a signer to use a front‑facing camera or video relay. It's great for lipreading cues, and of course there are a variety of topics that have been covered throughout the conference on tele‑health. Tele‑audiology, troubleshooting kinds of things. Because we have these front‑facing cameras.

Closed captioning. Closed captioning, for all these devices, too... did you know there is a way... you'll probably have to search for it... to turn on closed captioning automatically?

Okay. So you don't have to turn it on every time. Though I have noticed on some Facebook videos that if I'm on my phone, even though I have it set to always turn on closed captioning, I'm noticing the videos on Facebook, I have to go back in and say "enable closed captioning." So you never know what platform or what program people are using.

One thing that I'm still very mad about ‑‑ and I really wish that ‑‑ and I don't think it's the device's problem, I really think this is more the movie makers problem. Previews are not captioned. You know what? I'm a deaf person. I want to know what the movie is about before I give you $18 to buy that movie on iTunes or Google Play. So I know there are some people that are trying to kind of push for more things to be captioned. But, unfortunately ‑‑ I put 2019, because I just last night tested it for A Star is Born, you know the movie with Lady Gaga and Bradley Cooper. No captioning on the trailer.

Other features... how many people work with children or adults who have unilateral hearing loss or single‑sided deafness

Okay, I get questions sometimes about headphones or about, you know, routing the signal from one place to the other. Did you know that there is a feature... you know, so something that is recorded in true stereo will have a right channel and a left channel.

So that means you might hear lyrics on this channel and you might get instrumental on this channel. Well, if I'm deaf on this side, I'm not going to hear the lyrics. I'm just going to hear the instrumental.

So there is a feature called mono audio, and what it does is puts both channels together. And you can route it this way or you can route it that way.

There are ‑‑ and so that's like if you have headphones that you have laying around that you can use that feature.

There are also headphones... or did you know you can get just one ear bud?

So if you go to Amazon and you just say, "single‑sided earbud," that you can get that.

They sell it for people that have to be safe, so they have to keep one ear open, for kids and adults that have single‑sided deafness, this is a nice option.

I'm sorry, it's called a monaural earbud.

And then, of course, the notifications. We have the light set flash, we have vibrations, the badges, the banners that come down.

So, for me, as a person with hearing loss, I don't turn on the ‑‑ you know, the ringer on my phone. How many have a cell phone? How many got a cell phone in the past two years?

And then your phone rang and you didn't realize it was your phone, right? Because you haven't made that connection yet. That's me all the time. So I just tend to put it on vibrate. I've been without my Smart Watch for the past, like, five days and I feel naked. I left it at home, but that's another way that I will be alerted to things.

On Samsung phones, they actually have a feature, it's called Sound Detector. It's kind of lame. All it does right now is it has a baby crying detector. But you have to leave your phone in the bed. We like to read in bed and drop the phone while falling asleep. But you have to have two devices for something like that. And doorbell.

Did you know also for iOS devices there's a feature called Live Listen. So if your child or an adult has MFI, which means "made for iPhone hearing aids," we're not really using that in babies yet. I mean, that feature is not available, but if you have an older teen or something or an adult that you know of, there is a feature called Live Listen where you can actually use your phone as a remote microphone.

Now, my understanding is that there is a significant latency, meaning there is a delay. So that is just something to let you know about. But this is also a feature available.

There are speech‑to‑text things. How many of you guys talk into your phone to do texting or to write notes to yourself or whatever?

So, you know, one person... a really good friend of mine who is a speech therapist was talking about the fact that she will use speech‑to‑text software to work on articulation.

So does Siri understand we're working on the W sound? Why don't you ask Siri what the weather is?

Have the child talk into Siri and see how Siri might reply. The other thing she has done, they've worked on language kind of goals. And the child might type in a phrase and see if the voice output, the AAC, can understand what they want.

So that's just a way to use it.

Something that is brand‑new that just came out on Android devices is something called Live Transcribe. And this is a feature where, after you download this app from Google, it puts this little man down here that is the accessibility symbol. And you press it and within like a second you start talking and it does speech‑to‑text. So it will recognize your speech and print it out in text. And I have to say, it's been pretty cool.

It's pretty fast. And accurate.

So something to try as well.

All right, so now let's talk about apps.

How many of you know about "My App List."

Excellent. Most of you do not.

I started this app list in 2011 when apps first started coming out on the iPad. And I would be like... oh, that one would be really good because now it has captioning for the videos, so now it's accessible.

Or... oh, that would be really good for aural rehabilitation. A‑U‑R‑A‑L, like aural rehabilitation.

So I started gathering these apps, my app store I think at this point has over 3,000 apps, just on my account, that I have been trying. And I don't ‑‑ I didn't buy all of them. Sometimes developers will approach me and say, hey, will you try out this beta version of my app? And so what I did is I created this list. And that is... I know in 25 minutes that is not enough time to actually demonstrate any of the apps, but what I want you to know is how to access its.

So if you go to the handouts, you will see at the bottom, this is the link to the app list for Apple devices. This is the link for Android devices. So what I did is gathered all of these apps, and the ones I thought were not awful ‑‑ there are some pretty awful apps that even though it's supposed to be for deaf or hard of hearing I would not add it to my list or recommend it to anyone.

And so what I then did ‑‑ I'm like Babe the Pig. I have a need to gather things and put things in order and categorize them. And so I have these categories.

So on the right, you will see...

So, accessibility, that is where you're going to find apps like speech‑to‑text. That's where you're going to find apps that tell you things about like where is a hearing loop venue.

The next category... advocacy. How many of you have ever used the app ‑‑ an app from Rule the School?

There is a company that they make apps and it's all focused on self‑advocacy skills for deaf and hard of hearing children. So they have like a board game. They have like Tic‑tac‑toe, Bingo with hearing aid parts. So these apps work on advocacy skills.

The next one is audiology. So this is where you're going to find some really cool apps where you could show parts of the ear. This is a place where you might find apps like hearing loss simulations, okay?

So those are all under the categories. Classroom tools. You know, there are things like aural rehabilitation, organization, noise level meters for the classroom, things like that under classroom tools. Hearing tests.

So I do have a caveat in this section. If you have a concern about hearing, I always recommend that you go and see an audiologist. But, you know, we know... at least for adults, it takes an average of 7 to 10 years before someone will even think about getting help for their hearing loss. And so these hearing tests might be a good bridge, but, you know, they're not really regulated, but to be honest, for my mom, before she ‑‑ she was definitely ‑‑ she was about eight years in. And I'm like, Mom, you are withdrawing. I notice that you're leaning in. I just feel bad because I can tell that you're not able to follow the family conversation. So I took a hearing test app and I did it with my mom and... wow! Two days later she went to the audiologist and got hearing aids.

So it's a step. It's not going to be your ultimate diagnostics, but it's a step.

Listing therapy. This is the biggest section of this app list for both sides, for both Android and Apple devices, this is a place where you can find apps to practice on different listening skills. And there are listening skills for all ages, babies through high school.

Next... media player. This is almost outdated now because a lot of things have ‑‑ the apps now have captioning embedded into them. You know, when apps like Netflix or EBC Go or some of those first things came out, they did not have captioning support. And I remember when every time an update would come on and I would see it and, you know, show up in my list and it says "captioning support now available." I would take a screenshot and spread it on Facebook because I was so excited. But now almost all things on there are now accessible, which is fantastic.

So personal amplifier, I put this kind of in the same category as hearing tests. There are apps that are out there that can amplify sound.

So, you know, you're on your phone and you put in earbuds and you can amplify sound.

A good friend of mine did a study on these personal amplifier apps, his name is Sammie Wool Atcherson, and he found that there are some apps that are out there that went above 130‑decibels. That's like damaging. That will cause hearing loss. Okay?

So what I did on this... again, I would not advocate for using a personal amplifier as opposed to seeing an audiologist and pursuing hearing aids or whatever you need, but, again, if you have grandpa that is willing to wear headphones or earbuds and it helps him and he realizes that, wow, when I don't use this, I don't hear so well, and that makes him go to an audiologist, more power to you.

Okay?

Sign language... there are many, many apps that are out there that can teach you sign language. It's funny. Every once in a while I'll go to the iTunes store or Google Play and just type in "sign language" or "deaf" or something into the search bar. There are many apps out there that say sign language, but it's the ABCs, that's it.

Speech and language... I have a few apps on here. I realized I was getting overwhelmed with the speech and language apps, so I kind of stopped doing it.

Telecommunications, this is where you're going to find apps that do things like caption your mobile phone calls.

This is where you're going to find the list of apps for video relay that you can use on your mobile devices.

And then master list, which I'll explain in a minute. And then there's also a tab called resources, where I have my favorite developers, I have blogs that I think are pretty good for getting more information, as well as some favorite websites.

So what happens when you click on one of those links?

So this is what one of the tabs looks like. I admit, I did this on Google Sheets because it was easy and it's shareable and functional, but it's ugly. Maybe someday I'll hire a web developer, if anyone knows anybody that needs a job, and I'll make this look pretty and a little bit more functional. But the way that this works is...

So with all of these apps that I have been categorizing, on the left‑hand column, you will see the icon or the logo for the app, because you know that changes. You're never sure... oh, sound level meter, there's eight of them, which one is Tina talking about?

So I made sure to put the logo on there.

But also I have the title of the app. And you'll notice that this is hyperlinked. Because it's underlined in blue. And what that means is if you click on that box, it will take you straight to the iTunes store. So I kind of made it easy for you.

And then I have a column for cost. Now, the cost for apps changes sometimes. Sometimes they become free, sometimes they go up. Sometimes they go down. But this is just a snapshot. And then next I have a short description of the app. What I liked about it, what I didn't like about it. And then you'll see the different categories.

So, like, this one on the top, it says "spatial release," and it's in many categories. Audiology, hearing test, listening therapy.

I gave you the company website. So when your app doesn't work or you have a question, you can just click on that and it will send you straight to their contact page.

Now, this column on the right is really important. It says "date added to the list."

So the way that I organized this is that the most recent apps are at the top.

So if you're thinking, oh, I haven't checked Tina's app list for the past six months, I wonder what is new. I all you have to do is go to the top. You can also go... thank you.

You can also go and organize it by name or different things like that, but I've heard most people just leave it like that and that's how they see it.

So this tab is actually the master list tab, because it's all of the apps all together. So you could see, what are all of the apps in every category that I've added in the past six months as opposed to what are the listening therapy apps that I have added in the past six months.

If it's highlighted in yellow, like these two down at the bottom, those are ones that are kind of my favorites. Okay?

Some other resources that I have ‑‑ and we're running kind of out of time and I want to leave you guys some time for questions. You can look at these resources. My social bookmarking site, again, all these websites that I researched and used over the years, I've organized them.

I also have a list of all of the iTunes store web pages for the different hearing aid companies as well as cochlear implant companies.

All right. So now let's do some time for questions and we'll need the microphone passed around.

Thank you.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: For the telecommunication app, do you know if there are any that doesn't require WiFi? I understand why it requires WiFi, but are they past that yet?

>> TINA CHILDRESS: You mean WiFi or cellular?

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Well, like the one that I use is Innocaption and it requires WiFi to call ‑‑

>> TINA CHILDRESS: It's two ways.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Two ways. Are there any that don't require WiFi that provide captioning?

>> TINA CHILDRESS: Have you tried the web CapTel or Caption Call links? If you go to telecommunications tab, those are two other ones that are on there, and I don't think those require WiFi like Innocaption does.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hi, do you have any apps that would translate English speech into Spanish?

>> TINA CHILDRESS: Yes. So my two favorite ones... one is Microsoft Translator. And my second favorite one is Google Translate. They do a really good job. You can speak in English. It will give you output in Spanish or whatever the 60 different languages that they have available.

So those are my two favorites.

Any other questions? It's like an app quiz. Let's challenge Tina to see if she knows about the app. Bring it!

We have two more minutes. Bring it!

Okay...

Oh, there's another question in the back.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: If you could just put the link back up.

>> TINA CHILDRESS: Yeah.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: I've been reading about apps that can read signing and then translate it to text for people who don't sign very well. Have you heard any news about that or advancements or when they're going to be available?

>> TINA CHILDRESS: So here is my take on those apps that supposedly, like, understand sign language. It's not just about the signing, like with the gloves or anything like that. There is the two guys I think in Michigan... is that the app that you're talking about?

Okay.

But the thing about understanding receptively ASL, it's all about facial expression and movement and orientation and distance. I don't think honestly the technology is there yet, but things are improving so fast that I think that's why people keep looking at that.

>> We probably have time for one more question.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: What is your opinion about Mimics?

It's a signing avatar. So a person who is hearing and talks can talk into this Mimics app and then this avatar will sign.

>> TINA CHILDRESS: I have not seen that one yet. Thank you for telling me about that. I will add that to my list and investigate it. Thank you.

All right. So, if you are interested, I am doing a session right after this about assistive technology. You're welcome to stay. Thank you so much for your time and attention.

[Applause]

>> TINA CHILDRESS: And also, the handouts for this and my next presentation are all available at this web link too. So even if you don't stay for the second half, you'll at least see the handouts, which probably made me lose half my audience, but... okay.

Thank you! Safe travels home, everybody!