

# OPTIONschools

*Giving deaf children a voices*

## Some Basic Information on Hearing Loss

- Communication disorders affect approximately 46 million Americans. Of these, 28 million have hearing loss and 14 million have a speech or language disorder. – *American Speech-Language-Hearing Association*
- Hearing loss is the most common congenital anomaly found in newborns... and yet all newborns are not routinely tested for it.
- More than 12,000 babies are born each year with significant hearing loss, which can affect their speech and language development. – *National Institute on Deafness and Other communication Disorders*
- The average age of identification of early-onset hearing loss in the U.S. is two years of age.
- Any degree of hearing loss can be educationally handicapping for children. Even children with mild to moderate hearing losses can miss up to 50% of classroom discussions.
- Studies estimate that as much as 90% of what young children learn is attributable to the reception of incidental conversations around them (Flexer, 1993)
- 37% of children with only minimal hearing loss fail at least one grade (Bess, 1998)
- Unless they receive help, children with communication problems face the risk of long term difficulties with social relationships, education, and self esteem. – *Beyond Words Inc.*
- Recent NIH studies have shown that children with hearing loss who are identified and receive early intervention prior to six months of age develop significantly better language ability than children identified after six months
- 90% of hearing losses can be treated with the use of hearing instruments. – *Hearing Loss Association of Washington*
- For the 24 million Americans with untreated hearing loss, the impact of doing nothing about this problem equates to at least \$100 billion in lost income per year. – *Better Hearing Institute*
- One in six baby boomers have a hearing problem; one in 14 Generation X'ers already have hearing loss; and at least 1.4 million children have hearing problems. Despite the rising incidence of hearing loss, only about 1 out of 4 people with this problem use a hearing instrument. More than one million children with hearing problems are not being treated. – *Better Hearing Institute*

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