



BRIGHT SPOTS November 2020

The mission of the Bright School is to develop age appropriate speech and language skills of children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK

It has been a long time since Bright School has disseminated a newsletter. I am happy to share all the good things that are happening at school with all those who have been involved and supportive for so many years.

Most of you know that we have moved to our new home on the campus of Kingsley House. In order to meet our needs, the building was completely renovated with funds received from generous donors. This renovation allowed us to increase our enrollment and therefore be able to serve more families and their children. We are currently providing services to 25 students on site and 3 children in their homes.

Last March, our children were unfortunately asked to leave the campus and our school was closed because of COVID-19. We continued to serve our students by delivering language plans each week to all of our families. These plans were created by our teachers in order for the children to hopefully continue to progress while at home. The plans were easy to follow and used materials that could be found around the home.

We were happy to reopen this school year, August 10. Of course, it goes without saying, that the recent pandemic has forced us to make necessary adjustments to our program to ensure the safety of our students as well as our staff. We continue to follow all recommended Louisiana guidelines.



The Bright School is proud to announce that Mr. Michael White was the recipient of the 2019 Zurich Classic Community Impact Award.

Mr. White inspires parents and families who have children with hearing loss by being a positive role model and successful entrepreneur. He continues to be a vital and active individual in his community by serving on numerous boards or supporting his passion for Deaf education.

Mr. White works tirelessly to ensure that no child will go without the appropriate services and that families have the support and resources they need to be successful. Congratulations Mr. White on your well-deserved honor.

Thank You Fore!Kids Foundation and Zurich Classic

What's New?

The research continues in hopes that families who have a child with a hearing loss receive all the information necessary to make an informed decision on implantation. Researchers from Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago recently took a look at a group of children who received Cochlear Implants.

In the study, researchers reviewed 219 children who underwent cochlear implantation before they were three years old, including a group of 39 children who were implanted when younger than 12 months of age. The mean age at last follow-up was 7.5 years. They found that implanted infants developed word understanding ability one year earlier than those implanted as toddlers and were more likely to use spoken language alone to communicate. Children who were implanted after 2 years of age were much less likely to use spoken language exclusively.

Stephen Hoff, MD, from Lurie Children's, who is also Associate Professor at Northwestern University says, "Our results clearly show that kids who received cochlear implants in infancy make progress more rapidly and are more likely to use spoken language as their sole means of communication". He goes on to say, "More than 90% of deaf children have hearing parents. Most parents hope that a cochlear implant will enable their child to talk."

The field of cochlear implants is still considered to be in its infancy. Technological advances will lead to the development of more sophisticated and improved devices. It appears inevitable that as technology for cochlear prostheses advances, candidacy criteria for implantation will continue to expand to include a wider range of the population with severe and profound hearing impairments.

How Important are service providers?

In the world of Early Intervention, for a child with any exceptionality, there is hopefully a team of professionals that are supportive to the child as well as the family. Professionals that are serving this population should always be qualified to provide age appropriate services while also having the experience necessary to fulfill this huge responsibility.

It is often unfortunate that the professionals providing this vital service do not receive the training necessary or have the necessary experience to be successful. It is also unfortunate to the child that so much valuable time is lost during this process.

So how does a family find the most qualified professional? Take a look below for some informational bullets:

- Always look at the **educational background** of the service provider. Most of the time, their credentials can be found on a Matrix through your Early Intervention provider's website.
- Always look at the amount of **experience** the service provider has especially in the area of your child's exceptionality. For example, in choosing a speech therapist for a child with a hearing loss the therapist should have some experience working with children with hearing loss.
- **Establish** a good and open relationship with the service provider. Feel comfortable asking questions and setting appropriate goals for your child.
- **Expect** progress reports! You should always receive documentation of progress or the lack of progress your child is making during sessions.
- If you are not satisfied make a **change**. Nothing is ever written in stone and there is always another way or method to implement to better ensure progression.

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Our Kids at Play



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