

For the August 19 issue of Community Press

Hearing Loss: Ensuring Your Child is Not a Statistic

An estimated 1.4 million young people in the U.S. have a hearing loss. Yet only 12 % of them are receiving the help they need. A study by the Better Hearing Institute (BHI) found that too many children with hearing loss are not getting help and are at risk for social, emotional, behavioral, and learning difficulties.

“Children need to be able to hear in every environment including the classroom, home, community, on the playground or sports field,” said Dr. Laurie DeWine, one of the audiologists at *The Place for Better Hearing*. “Even a mild hearing loss can create a handicapping condition for many children and adolescents.” added Dr. DeWine.

Too many parents hear the word “mild” and assume it means the hearing loss is not serious enough to do something about. Audiologist Stefanie Godbey explained, “Children with mild hearing loss can miss 25 to 50 percent of speech signals, especially during classroom discussions. Untreated hearing loss affects nearly all dimensions that even children with ‘minimal’ or unilateral (one ear) hearing loss are at risk academically when compared to their normal hearing peers.”

75% of parents surveyed by BHI indicated their children experienced problems due to hearing loss. The most serious problems experienced impacted social skills, school grades and language development, emotional health, relationships with peers, self-esteem, and relationships with family.

So, why don't parents get their children's hearing treated? The BHI study found that some parents minimized, denied, or in some instances, chose to ignore the seriousness of their child's hearing loss. Three out of ten parents expressed concern about how people might perceive their child if he or she wore hearing devices.

(MORE)

The Place for Better hearing recommends your child have their hearing tested:

- If your infant fails an at-birth hearing screening in either ear, follow-up with an audiologist within 90 days for more testing.
- Before entering kindergarten by an Audiologist.
- If your child has frequent ear infections for more than three months. These children are at risk for temporary and sometimes permanent hearing loss and should be closely monitored.

To schedule a hearing screening, call The Place for Better Hearing at 922-0123.