



Mainstream News

Information about hearing loss for students, families and educators

Getting Ready for Graduation

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PEDIATRICS

With the end of the school year on the horizon, many students have a very special day circled on their calendars—graduation day! It is a time filled with excitement, nostalgia and anticipation for the future. It is also a time to carefully consider access for our students with hearing loss so they are privy to detailed rehearsal instructions and the meaningful messages delivered by commencement speakers. The following are key areas to consider as graduation exercises draw near.



Organize communication between the student and key staff.

Those in charge of graduation events may not be familiar with the student with hearing loss and his or her specific access needs and preferences. Our teachers of the deaf reach out to each student's individual and/or class advisors to arrange a planning meeting with key staff. Having an in-person discussion allows everyone to review events and procedures together and identify specific times when accommodations will be needed. This provides an opportunity for the student to ask questions and participate in developing an access plan. Following this meeting, keeping everyone updated in the days and weeks leading up to graduation (such as through group emails) helps ensure no stone goes unturned.

Make use of the student's personal FM system.

For many students, their FM system is essential during rehearsals and on graduation day. With an entire class coming together for practices in an auditorium, gymnasium or outdoor facility, catching all of the directions is more challenging due to distance from speakers, background noise and reverberation in these settings. If the person leading rehearsals is new to the student, encourage the student to meet with this person briefly prior to the first rehearsal to explain how to use the FM correctly. For graduation day and related

awards ceremonies, students often request that the FM system be placed at the podium for each speaker to use. This provides much better access than what they can hear and understand via the public speaker system.

Provide preferential seating.

Seating for graduates is typically alphabetical, which can pose a problem for students with hearing loss depending on where this places them. For those who need to be close to the front for better access to speakers, there can be easy workarounds. Students have been given an aisle seat near the front, for example, and then simply step into line at the correct point alphabetically when graduates proceed to the stage to receive their diplomas. At banquets and award ceremonies, requesting a seat ahead of time where the student is closer to the podium with unobstructed visual access is ideal.

Provide printed copies of instructions and speeches.

Rehearsal instructions provided in written form will help the student review and clarify understanding of procedures (i.e. "When the speaker says _____, everyone stands"). Calendars with the rehearsal schedule marked clearly help students know where and when rehearsals will be and what will be covered. Written instructions should include related details, such as the process and options for obtaining graduation gowns (i.e. purchase versus

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rent). Graduation ceremonies are also rich in tradition, with specific poems or songs often included in a school's program and recited as a community. Providing the student with copies of these pieces ahead of time will allow the student some additional time to review them.

Printed copies of graduation speeches are a necessity for many students, even when the FM system is being used at the podium. Some schools have been able to provide copies for students with hearing loss ahead of time, while others have copies ready at the ceremony (i.e. placing a copy at a student's assigned seat).

Consider live captioning.

While parts of graduation ceremonies are scripted, many moments are not. Poignant exchanges and comments from speakers are often added to planned remarks, jokes are interjected, and so on. CART (Computer-Assisted-Real Time-Transcription) is another option to consider for providing complete access. CART offers live captioning of all communication conveyed to the audience. Your state's commission for the deaf and hard of hearing is a good starting point for locating a CART professional in your area (advance notice is required).



CART access is seen in the background at this graduation ceremony.

The Collaborative for Communication Access via Captioning (CCAC) urges schools to offer CART as a means of providing universal access:

We encourage school leaders to plan to include CART during graduation ceremonies...Up to fifty percent of the large audience will use it and appreciate it. A transcript of the special day will be created at the same time. Including CART (i.e., live captioning) will help educate all about the need for captioning in so many places...

ccacaptioning.org/captioning-education-literacy-graduations

Don't forget the youngest graduates!

While we typically think of high school students during graduation season, the lower grades often host special ceremonies, too. Schools may celebrate the completion of kindergarten or the final year of elementary school. Preferential seating; projecting agendas and lyrics to songs and poems for all to see (and reviewing them together ahead of time); making use of the FM system during rehearsals and on the big day—all of these strategies are important to consider in advance.



End-of-the-year ceremonies are a perfect opportunity to help our students learn about access planning and explore the strategies that work best for them. The most important thing to remember is that each student's needs and preferences are unique. Organizers should not assume that an access plan that worked for a previous student is applicable to a current student. Involving the student provides important practice that will benefit the student now and in the years to come. At the college level, for example, students bear sole responsibility for requesting access prior to commencement exercises. Knowing what they need and how to ask for it, our students will be well equipped to get the most out of these special occasions and walk away with memories that will last a lifetime!

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10 Tips for Successful Spring Field Trips

After a long winter—especially here in New England—students and teachers alike look forward to a change in the daily routine and a chance to explore a new place away from school grounds. While good preparation makes field trips more meaningful and enjoyable for all children (as well as the adults in charge!) there are some simple steps that will ensure your student with hearing loss gets the most out of your next excursion.

1. Connect with the facility you plan to visit ahead of time and, if possible, speak directly to the person who will be leading your group. Ask what the children will see, and what they will let them do and not do, so you can share essential information ahead of time. Don't take for granted a child's background knowledge and vocabulary related to the destination, or assume the child knows what the place is or what the rules are.

2. Schedule the trip at a time that will provide the best possible listening environment. To lessen confusion and background noise, ask what days—and times of the day—will be less crowded. In addition, ask for preferential seating, closer to the speaker and with clear visual access. If possible request that your guide meet with your group in a quiet area at the beginning of a visit for introductions and review of rules.

3. Let the facility know that a child with hearing loss will be in your group. Keep the explanation simple. You might say that the child speaks, listens and speechreads to communicate. Encourage the guide to speak normally and to be open to repeating or rephrasing occasionally. Ask the guide to stay in one location when talking, and then move to the next location. A guide who talks and walks around at the same time will be difficult for the child who needs speechreading cues.

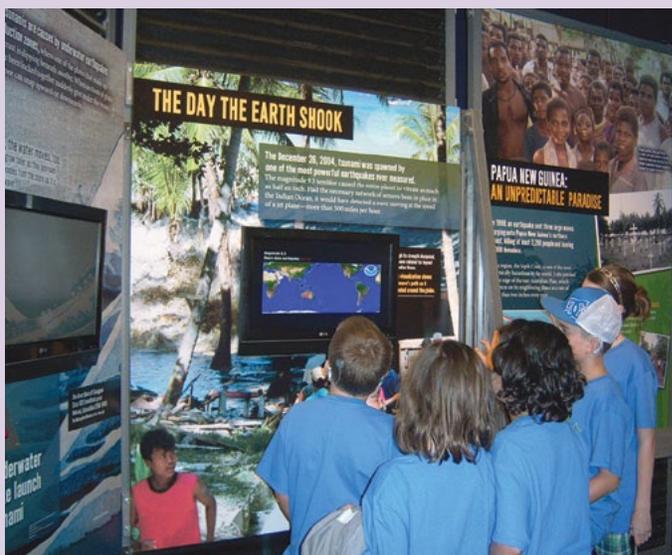
4. Make use of the student's personal FM system. Check the system to make sure it is charged and on the correct setting before leaving. Teachers can use the system for communication as needed during the bus ride. At your destination, the tour guide can be asked to wear the FM system. If students are dismissed after a presentation to explore on their own, the student's chaperone or teacher in charge should then wear the FM. Remember to bring along extra hearing aid or implant batteries.

5. Request captioned media ahead of time. If students will watch a movie on the bus, make sure it is captioned and that the bus driver knows how to turn the captions on. If a movie or short film is part of a tour, ask ahead of time if it is captioned. If it is not, ask if a script is available.

6. Plan for the weather. Let families know how much of the trip will be outdoors regardless of weather conditions so the child can pack appropriate gear (jacket with a hood, sweat guards) to protect amplification devices.

7. Prepare and review a simple itinerary. Knowing what to expect helps prevent a child from being caught off guard and not knowing what he or she should be doing.

8. Review associated language and vocabulary with the child before and after the trip. Parents and the child's teacher of the deaf or speech pathologist can be excellent partners in preparing and following up with the child to check understanding. Sharing information about an upcoming trip such as your itinerary, a brochure or website is helpful for previewing. Share any photos taken on the trip so they can be used for follow up processing.



9. Consider accessibility ahead of time for overnight trips. Your older student may have the opportunity to go on a multi-day class trip or participate in school athletic events that require overnight stays. Public facilities must provide accommodations that ensure accessibility (e.g. visual fire alarms, TDDs or amplified phones, closed captions, door signalers, bed shaker alarms) when given advanced notice. Hopefully your student has a system for waking up independently (children do not wear their hearing aids/implants when sleeping so will not hear a standard alarm clock). If not, overnight trips are a perfect opportunity to introduce bed shaker alarms. If all students are responsible for getting themselves up on time, this student should be as well.

10. Look for ways to raise awareness and promote self-advocacy. After a trip, talk with your student about what went well and any areas that may have been challenging. Teachers often have students write thank-you letters to the people who managed the trip. This is a perfect opportunity for the student to share what he or she enjoyed and thank the tour guide for doing a great job with the FM, for example. If parts of the trip were difficult to access, the student might explain why and offer suggestions for improving the experience for future guests with hearing loss (such as the need for captions or written guides).

After you earn your license, how do you envision making use of it?

I plan to fly for recreation, such as in the autumn to see the beautiful foliage over the Berkshires or to go to Cape Cod for the day for sightseeing. Hopefully one day I'll get my private pilot's license, which would allow for a single engine, more powerful plane that seats up to four people versus the two-seaters that I am currently flying.

What advice do you have for other kids with hearing loss who have an interest in flight?

Don't be afraid, take chances. There are more opportunities out there than what you think. Stick up for yourself. There's something out there for anyone in aviation—pilot, mechan-

ic, engineer and more—there is something there for you if you follow your passion. It's helpful to go to an airport and talk to someone about what the options are and to get an idea of the requirements.



Deaf Pride

By: Carys, Grade 7

Can you **see** the pride
that I feel inside?
A continuous fire-breathing dragon
in my chest.
And when I walk
through the crowds,
I really don't care if they point, stare,
or whisper behind my back.
They're like rain,
gotta face it to reach your
rainbow.

At night, I escape the world of noise and into
the darker science, my world.
The magnets of my implants
draw me back to your world.

I'm not embarrassed that I am deaf,
and am brave enough
to stand out boldly,
to ask others:

“Do you want to
stand out with me
and be different?”

Cause that's just who I am...

Can you **see** the pride,
can you **feel** the pride?



Aviation History and Hearing Loss

Ryan joins a number of impressive individuals whom your students will surely be interested in learning about! Here is a glimpse, along with websites to check out for more information.

Calbraith Perry Rodgers was the first pilot to fly across the United States in 1911. He had a severe hearing loss that was the result of scarlet fever as a child. nationalaviation.org/rodgers-calbraith

Nellie Willhite was not only the first woman to fly in South Dakota, in 1927 she became the first deaf woman to earn her pilot's license. Willhite contracted measles at age two, which caused her hearing loss. She flew in acrobatic shows, was a transport pilot and flight instructor, and a charter member of the "Ninety-Nines" (an organization for female pilots). southdakotamagazine.com/nellie-willhite

Stephen Hopson became the first deaf instrument-rated private pilot in February 2006. This arduous license allows him to fly in all kinds of weather, relying on instruments when visibility is poor. Access Stephen's 2011 Clarke commencement speech at clarkeschools.org/gradspeech2011.



The Deaf Pilots Association, incorporated in 2001, is comprised of pilots with hearing loss from the U.S. and abroad. deafpilots.org

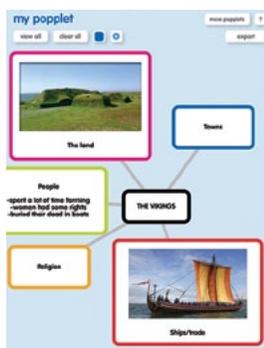
Kid Tested, Teacher of the Deaf Approved!

Today's technology puts so many resources at our fingertips. Apps have expanded the repertoire of student-friendly tools that educators, therapists and parents can make use of when working with children on speech, language and listening skills, social conversation, organization and more. They can be a fun way to provide supplemental practice in therapy sessions and at home. Because there are so many apps out there, it can be hard to sift through them all and determine which ones are really worth the download. In this and future issues, we will feature apps recommended by our staff. Here are the first few that are kid tested and teacher of the deaf approved!

Popplet by Notion

Suggested ages: Elementary through high school and beyond

Overview: Our teachers of the deaf often use Popplet to help students organize their ideas before writing a rough draft. It allows students to create a visual map when brainstorming. For example, a student asked to write a paragraph to describe something (e.g. the Vikings), would put that word in the center and then add different "bubbles" (categories) of information connecting to it. The student might talk about the land, the people, the religion, and so on. The app is simple and user-friendly, allowing you to easily adjust the size and color of the bubbles. Another cool feature is that you can add pictures in addition to words.



Toca Boca apps by Toca Boca AB (**Toca Tailor, Toca Kitchen, Toca Fairy Tales, Toca Foods** to name a few!)

Suggested ages: 4+

Overview: Toca Boca apps allow children to create and explore in a non-competitive format (racing to be first or earning points are not part of these apps). Each app offers a play scape with a particular theme where a child's imagination leads the way. While they can be used for independent play, our teachers of the deaf find them to be great tools for building vocabulary (clothing, food, colors, prepositions) while practicing auditory skills and directions. Endless possibilities for instruction can be adjusted based on a student's level. For example, using Toca Tailor, a student can be asked to dress a character with basic directions like, "First choose a hat, and then choose shoes." Or, more complex, "After you put a red scarf around his neck, put a green hat on his head." Still more complex, "Before you make the upper half of the shirt red, make the lower half of the shirt green. Then chose a patterned material for the sleeves." With a photo option, students can take pictures that become the backdrop for their character. This creates even more fun with directions like, "Now take a photo of your character next to the tallest plant on the table near the window."



Do you have a favorite app that you use with your students? Send your recommendations to mainstream@clarkeschools.org.

Wil is a fifth-grade student who has a strong interest in helping others learn about hearing loss.

Dear Wil,
I am going to be changing classes for the first time next year. Do you do that yet? I am not sure about carrying all my stuff plus my FM system. Do you have advice?



So, yes, actually I ran into that problem myself this year. With all the books, pencils, and the binder it's hard to do! One solution I used was to just clip it to the binder. So you have a checklist:

1. Hold the binder with the thickest part facing forward.
2. Take the FM's belt clip and clip it to the top of the binder.
3. If the rings are big enough (two inches or larger) you can slip the pass-around mic into the rings and it fits well.



Other than your hearing aids, do you use any other technology at home?

Yes, I like to use closed captioning for TV and movies. This helps me because if you are watching a show and you miss a word or two you can use the words to help you. It takes a little while to get used to, but it's really worth it to know everything the person said (especially when someone says something funny!). Recently my brother and I were lucky to receive an FM system as a gift from our grandparents to use at home. It's helped us out so much. First of all, it helps us with after school activities such as clubs, Sunday School and sports. It's also very helpful to use with the TV or when listening to music.

Do you or your students have questions for Wil? Please send them to mainstream@clarkeschools.org.

Clarke's Summer Adventure Program Expands Offerings for 2015

Exciting changes are on tap for Clarke's Summer Adventure Program. By popular request, the ages of the camp have been extended. Two programs will run simultaneously, **Summer Adventurers for ages 9-13** and **Summer Explorers for ages 14-17**. The camp will be held July 5-17, 2015 on the campus of the Williston Northampton School in Easthampton, MA.

This year's theme—**Clarke's Amazing Race: Believe It, Achieve It!**—is all about building self-confidence, challenging oneself, working as a team, making friends, building leadership skills and having fun! Clarke camp is the place to be if you want to meet other kids with hearing loss who use listening and spoke language.

Campers spend their days with teachers of the deaf doing fun activities, going on field trips, swimming, hanging with friends, learning about themselves and their hearing loss. They spend their evenings in the dorm with dorm counselors, many of whom have hearing loss and serve as great role models. Summer Adventure brings children together on common ground, while encouraging them to discover new things about themselves and what they can accomplish.



For more information, please visit clarkeschools.org/summeradventure or contact Martha deHahn at 413-587-7387 or mdehahn@clarkeschools.org.

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Olivia is a sixth-grade student who wears cochlear implants. With some creative solutions for her technology—and a positive attitude—Olivia shares her advice for summer fun!

Olivia's Summer Tips

Swimming and going to the beach is fun and relaxing, but watch out for the sun! Swimming is a whole different world, but sometimes it's a pain not to hear while swimming. Thankfully there is a solution. All you need is a waterproof bag that can hold your implant and a bathing cap. First, I like to put the bathing cap on. Next, I put my implant in the bag and slip it inside, connecting the magnets like usual. Even though I use the bathing cap, some of my deaf friends don't! Before we go into the pool, we make up simple signals for words or phrases to communicate easier. If all else fails just use a wet finger and write out the word or phrase on the edge of the pool. Going to the beach is always a must, but your implant can have some limits. If you take off your implant to go in the water don't put it in a beach bag, put it in a zip-lock bag. You can also use the bathing cap and waterproof pack for the beach.

Sports are hard if your implant keeps falling off, but there are two ways to fix that. You can put your implant under your hair then put your hair in a ponytail around it, but make sure that the magnet is completely covered with your hair. Another way is to use a sweat band and put it over your hearing aid. If all else fails, be creative and make your own!

Summer Camp and sleepovers are so much fun... until your battery dies. To prevent that, always bring an extra battery pack or batteries. Going to a new camp means explaining to people that you're deaf. The first step in doing that is to be comfortable about it, it's a beautiful part of who you are! The second step is to be patient. People are going to ask good questions and some stupid ones, too. Just answer them calmly and as best as you can to help them understand. Have fun with it and remember a little creativity can go a long way. Take off your implant and have someone sing a song while acting it out and you have to guess the song!



Going to a new camp means explaining to people that you're deaf. The first step in doing that is to be comfortable about it, it's a beautiful part of who you are!



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Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech
provides children who are deaf or hard of
hearing with the listening, learning and spoken
language skills they need to succeed.

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Clarke Mainstream Services' 36th Annual Mainstream Conference **"The Sounds of Success: Believe It and Achieve It!"**

OCTOBER 22 & 23, 2015

Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel & Trade Center
Marlborough, MA

Join us for two days of work-
shops, keynote speakers and
networking opportunities of-
fered by experts in the field of
hearing loss.



Day two of the conference also
features the 13th annual **"Making Connections!"** program designed for students
with hearing loss who currently attend a mainstream school in grades 7-12.

Young adults, who are deaf or hard of hearing, design and facilitate the program
and serve as role models to the students who attend.

Visit clarkeschools.org/mainstreamconference for more information.