

# Louisiana Hands & Voices

## Connections Newsletter,

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May 2015

### Summer Camps -- Making Connections for Kids with Hearing Loss

Summer is here, and there are many opportunities around the state for kids with hearing loss.

Kids Kamp 2015 is scheduled for June 6-8 at Camp Istrouma in Greenwell Springs, LA. Kids Kamp is for children ages 6-17 who are deaf, hard of hearing, hearing with deaf family members, or interested in learning sign language. This camp includes two nights, meals and activities such as canoeing, riding pedal boats, playing games, socializing, ziplining, rockwall climbing, swimming and much more! Cost is \$100 per person. For more information can be found at [www.deaffocus.com](http://www.deaffocus.com).

Lions Club camp. The Lions Club is sponsoring their annual camp in 2015 at their facilities located about six miles north of Leesville on Hwy 171.

More information can be obtained at [www.lionscamp.org](http://www.lionscamp.org).

The Bright School in New Orleans is offering a six week summer program this summer for children 18 months to three years of age. If you have or know of a child that is deaf, hard of hearing or a child that would benefit from their camp, please contact Linda Frantz for more information at 504-256-9200.

Assembly of God Camp. The 38th Louisiana Assembly of God Deaf Camp is scheduled July 29 to Aug 2 for children ages 10 to 18 will be held at the Assemblies of God Campground in Woodworth. Tuition is free and transportation is provided. This camp is open to all students regardless of the degree of hearing loss. For more information, please contact [ladeaf@cox.net](mailto:ladeaf@cox.net) or Rev. Ron DeWitt (225) 241-0773 Voice or text. ♦



*"What works for your child is what makes the choice right"™*

Non-biased support for families of children who are deaf and hard of hearing

Email: [handsandvoicesofla@yahoo.com](mailto:handsandvoicesofla@yahoo.com)

Website: [www.lahandsandvoices.org](http://www.lahandsandvoices.org)



GUIDE BY  
YOUR SIDE™

sign language.

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### Birth to Three [and beyond]: No Time to Be Afraid

A soundbooth is a strange, unearthly place, like a room without air, except that you can breathe – although not comfortably if it's your first time and you have your three year old son sitting anxiously in your lap. This, as it happens, was not our first time but our third. It is a ridiculous understatement to say so, but it would not be our last.

Our first foray into the sound booth had been seventeen months earlier. It was a different soundbooth, a different audiologist, and a different outcome. She assured me that his hearing was fine. How can she tell? I wondered to myself. Even I, his mother, couldn't tell whether he was really hearing those tones, which sounded vaguely like the signal from

the Emergency Broadcasting System, or whether he just looked around until he saw the bear or the rabbit light up in their boxes. But she's the expert! And she had just told me what I wanted to hear.

"Hear? Of course he can hear. He loves music. He sings along! He talks too, only a little, but he'll catch up. His sister was a late talker too. She didn't talk, not at all, until she was 26 months old, and then she was talking in sentences. He's just like his sister."

That was what I told myself, and that is what I believed in my heart, so when the audiologist told me his hearing was fine, it was quite what I expected to hear. But it wasn't true.

Now we sat for the third time in this padded room where sounds sound flat and dead. I listened and watched the bear light up, then the rabbit, but only as the sound grew loud and louder. Then my little boy would turn and smile. The tone or the voice would come again and I'd hear it, but there was no bear, no rabbit, because he didn't look, just stared around, waiting, waiting to hear what I heard.

The second time we'd been in the booth it was the same booth, the same audiologist, the same outcome. He'd had a cold, so we needed to wait and come back in a few weeks, just to be sure.

(Cont'd on page 2)

**Meet us at the  
Pool / Park**  
Center Circle Park, Sulphur

June 6 10 am—1 pm

Hotdogs, chips and  
softdrinks provided

FREE swim 10 am to noon

Come join us!



## Birth to Three [and Beyond]: No Time to be Afraid (Cont'd from page 1)

By: Chris Sullivan, Colorado Hands & Voices parent

Sure? I was already sure. I was there in the booth, and I heard what I heard, heard what he did not hear. This audiologist was sure too, the look on her face, as flat as the sound in the booth. Who wants to deliver bad news? How bad?

“What will it mean if we come back and the result is the same?” I asked, because I wanted to know, even as I did not want to know.

“He’ll have to wear hearing aids...”

That is the end of what I heard on that visit. The rest turned to noise, like the pure tones, meaningless. What? As if I could not hear. Hearing aids. What had I expected to hear? People who can’t hear wear hearing aids. But my little boy can hear.

That day, before the world changed, and we became a family-with-a-child-with-a-hearing-loss, my vocabulary didn’t include the words “hard of hearing,” let alone “moderate, binaural, sloping, sensorineural, hearing loss,” only the words hearing and deaf. Now I use words like otolaryngologist and Conceptually Accurate Signed English and amplification technology in casual conversation. It’s hard to believe that a few very, very long months ago the words “hearing aids” had made me feel afraid.

So our third visit to the sound booth brought us no surprises, just verification. More pure tones, not so pure when your baby can’t hear them, more vain attempts at calling his name. Daniel. Daniel, can you hear me? No.

And yes. Daniel can hear his name. He can hear it when I say it as I hold him and rock him and put my voice near his ear. He can hear it from across the room when he is wearing his blue earmolds, their curving tubes connected to loaner hearing aids, flesh-colored. When we get his own pair of aids, they’ll be sparkled and spangled, bright, demanding to be seen and

admired. Because now, hearing aids do not make me feel afraid. They make me feel hopeful and grateful and only a little tiny bit sad.

The trip from afraid to here was fast, the bullet train of transformation, because when your three year old is hard of hearing, you don’t have time to waste in the land of afraid. “Late diagnosed” was another turn of phrase that passed through the dictionary of my mind, slipping through and away, because it nags at me to be guilty and worried and sad, and I just don’t have the time.

Because I am very busy now. I have become, in a moment, an auto-didact in the fine arts of audiology, speech and language pathology and deaf education. My new profession is keeping three kids productively occupied through two hour phone calls and appointments. But this, my profession, is why I am not afraid.

I have been home schooling my two older children for the better part of ten years, so we know how to learn things. And that is what we have done. Why wait? Why not jump in, dive in, submerge ourselves in the learning. That is, after all, what we do. Knowledge is power. We are not afraid. We are powerful. We are surrounded with people – audiologists, therapists, teachers, doctors – more knowledgeable than we, and they are sharing that knowledge, making us more powerful still.

We are more powerful than any amplification technology or signed language, more powerful even than the silence that felt so threatening in the booth, the silence that I did not hear, but that my Daniel heard. We are powerful because we know what we did not want to know, and more, because we love – love the technology, love the signs, and most of all, love, love, love the little boy with the big blue earmolds in his little ears.♦



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### What’s happening:

- 05/28 LA EHDI Advisory Council  
Baton Rouge
- 06/06 Meet us at the Pool/ Park,  
Center Circle Park, Sulphur
- 09/18-20 HV National Conference,  
New Braunfels, Texas

