**Importance of Hearing**



Hearing loss is a common issue in children. Approximately 3 out of every 1,000 newborns are born with significant hearing loss. Although the advent of newborn hearing screening helps identify hearing problems at birth, slight to mild hearing losses may not be detected by this screening. In addition, a hearing loss may occur later in life due to a multitude of reasons. Some causes of hearing loss include cytomegalovirus, meningitis, genetic conditions, low birth weight, stay in the neonatal intensive care unit for five or more days, and family history of hearing loss. However, most causes of hearing loss are unknown. Hearing loss may be sensorineural (a permanent condition caused by damage to the inner ear), conductive, (which is typically a temporary condition), or mixed. Conductive hearing losses are caused by middle or outer ear pathology such as an ear infection, wax, or foreign body in the ear. Although a child may have a conductive hearing loss, the effects can still be detrimental to a child’s speech, language, and overall development. A child with a mild to moderate hearing loss misses up to 50% of information presented in the classroom (Gordon-Langbein, A. [www.agbell.org](http://www.agbell.org)). Therefore, it is important to ensure a child’s hearing is within normal limits during the critical language development period. Some indications that your child may not be hearing properly include: he/she needs the television turned up louder, responds to conversation better when he/she has visual cues, or says “huh” or “what” frequently. If you have any questions about your child’s hearing or would like further information about hearing, please contact a Speech Language Pathologist or Audiologist at the New Interdisciplinary School.