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NEWS

Hearing Loss among Children Goes Undetected

ALEXANDRIA, VA (June 30, 2005) Hearing loss in more than a million American children is undetected or untreated, according to the Better Hearing Institute (BHI). That can cause more than academic problems; it can also lead to low-self esteem, attention deficit and difficulties understanding speech, especially when there is background noise.

To help meet this challenge, the BHI has provided a **free “Guide to Your Child’s Hearing,” which is available from Advanced Hearing Aid Center** free of charge to physicians and health care providers in the Rochester area. The guide gives parents practical tips about how to recognize and address hearing loss in children. It was written by Dr. Judith Gravel, Director of the Center for Childhood Communication at The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia.

Dr. Gravel shows parents how to recognize the signs of normal hearing at different developmental stages, how to detect signs of hearing problems, and the many treatment options that are now available. “Our research shows one reason children with hearing problems aren’t getting help is that some parents think that hearing aids will stigmatize their kids, embarrass them and cause people such as peers to treat them differently,” said Dr. Sergei Kochkin, Executive Director of the not-for-profit BHI, which promotes better hearing with research and educational initiatives. “Parents often minimize their child’s hearing loss despite strong evidence that even a mild hearing problem can cause behavioral and learning problems. If parents don’t help their children –and themselves— to overcome the stigma associated with hearing problems, they are really shortchanging their kids. New hearing instruments have been developed specifically for children. Some come in bright colors and kids are even proud to wear them. So there is just no excuse for ignoring this problem.”

“Even seemingly minor hearing problems can significantly impact on children’s development,” said Dr. Gravel. “If a child in grade school can’t hear certain consonants correctly, it might not even be noticed by the parents or teachers. But that child is likely to have problems in academic areas. And in early life, even mild hearing loss may cause speech and language delay. So parents need to be vigilant about this.”

Advanced Hearing Aid Center provides comprehensive audiological evaluations and hearing aid services. It is located in the Country Village Center at the corner of Long Pond Road and Maiden Lane, Greece.