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May 1, 2024

Dear Families:

Happy May! My name is (*first and last name, credentials*), and I’m the educational audiologist assigned to (*school name*).

I’m reaching out to you because today marks the beginning of *National Speech-Language-Hearing Month.* Did you know that 15% of school-aged children (ages 6–19 years) have some degree of hearing loss? In your child’s school, I work with students who have hearing difficulties.

Although some children are born with atypical hearing, other kids develop or acquire difficulties with their hearing later in childhood. When left unaddressed, hearing loss can affect a child’s academics, social success, and even their behavior.

May is the perfect time to familiarize yourself with the signs of hearing loss in children. These signs include turning the TV volume up louder than is comfortable for others, having difficulty in school that isn’t explained by other reasons, reporting that they hear ringing or other noises in their ears, and being socially isolated or unhappy. Please reach out to the school, or visit an audiologist, if you have any concerns about your child’s hearing so that they can receive a full hearing evaluation.

I’d also like to take this opportunity to share some tips for protecting your child’s hearing. These tips are important because many traditional summer pastimes are exceedingly loud. Attending sporting events, fireworks displays, and concerts/festivals—and spending more time using tablets, smartphones, and gaming devices—can all lead to permanent hearing damage. The good news is that hearing loss from noise exposure is completely preventable by taking some simple steps—including the following:

* **Lower the volume** **on electronic devices.** Aim to listen to personal technology devices at half volume (or less), especially when using earbuds or headphones.
* **Keep your distance from noise sources.** Stay at least 500 feet away from speakers, a stage, or a fireworks launch site.
* **Take regular listening breaks.** When attending a noisy event, step out of the loud area periodically to give your ears a rest. When using electronics, take earbuds or headphones out every hour (even if just for a few minutes).
* **Wear hearing protection at noisy events.** Earplugs work well for older children and adults. Younger children can wear well-fitting earmuffs. If your child plays an instrument, you might want to consider musician’s earplugs, which will still allow kids to hear the music.

I wish you a healthy summer ahead!

Best wishes,

(*Insert signature*)