

BACKGROUND

When compared to deaf and hard of hearing children without developmental differences, children with developmental differences may require alternative tools to learn about their hearing aids. Audiologists have an important role in supporting patient's independent hearing aid use and self-advocacy skills through providing developmentally appropriate education.

The goal of this project was to promote self-advocacy and independence for children with developmental delays. This was accomplished through the use of a social story about wearing and caring for hearing aids.

Aldabas (2019) states social stories:

- Help with social skills
- Teach particular skills
- Help adjust to change

METHODS

This social story was created based on the paradigm for social stories developed by Carol Gray (Gray, 2015). The social story provides developmentally appropriate information about wearing and caring for hearing aids and discusses the auditory benefits of hearing aid use. To reduce the risk of bullying, specific examples of how to talk about one's hearing loss and hearing aids are modeled (Spangler, C. L., & DeConde Johnson, C. (2017)).

This social story was created with the intention of collaboration between the patient and an adult and includes illustrations and developmentally appropriate language to make the materials more accessible to children with language and developmental delays. The story is created in an editable format to allow it to be individualized.

Development of this social story was supported by collaboration between the author, audiologists, and professionals with developmental disability expertise.

The social story includes the following sections:

1. Hearing aid illustration
2. Morning and nighttime routine
3. Auditory benefits
4. Taking a break, asking for help, and hearing aid care
5. Talking about hearing aids and hearing loss.

RESULTS

Example of a social story for a patient with rechargeable hearing aids.

WEARING MY HEARING AIDS
This book belongs to _____

I wear hearing aids on my ears.
This is a picture of me wearing my hearing aids.
Draw or paste a picture of you wearing your hearing aids.

In the morning I wake up and get dressed. Then I put my hearing aids on.
Morning Wake up Get dressed Hearing aids
The soft earmold goes in my ear. The colorful hearing aid goes behind my ear.
What color is your hearing aid and earmold?

I wear my hearing aids at home.
At home I like to hear...
The TV My pets Music
Circle your favorite thing to hear at home.

I wear my hearing aids at school.
At school I like to hear...
My teacher My friends The bell
Circle your favorite thing to hear at school.

Sometimes, I take a break from my hearing aids after school. I always ask an adult before taking a break.
When I take a break I...
Give them to an adult Put them in a case Plug them in to charge
Circle what you do with your hearing aids.

I do not wear my hearing aids in the shower or bath. I put them in my room when I take a shower or bath.
1 First
2 Second

I take good care of my hearing aids.
Before I go to bed I take my hearing aids off and charge them.

I know who to ask for help with my hearing aids.
At home I ask...
Write the name of someone you can ask at home
At school I ask...
Write the name of someone you can ask at school
These adults check my hearing aids to make sure they work. If they sound funny I can tell an adult.

Sometimes people ask me about my hearing aids. I can say...
1. My hearing aids help me hear. They are super ears!
2. My hearing aids bring music right to my ears. I don't even need headphones!
3. Your glasses help you see and my hearing aids help me hear.
You can practice saying these with a friend!
My hearing aids are important to me. I wear them every day.

CONCLUSIONS

This social story was created in order to provide developmentally appropriate information about hearing loss and hearing aids to children with developmental differences. It is hypothesized that use of developmentally appropriate language and pictures supports will support children with developmental delays to take more responsibility for their hearing aids and to be better self advocates.

These materials will be publicly available for download on the Open Science Framework. Materials are customizable once downloaded. Additional research is needed to explore the efficacy of this social story in supporting hearing aid use and self-advocacy skills.

IMPLICATIONS

This social story provides introductory information about hearing loss and hearing aids. If future research supports the efficacy of this approach, similar social stories could be created around the following topics:

- Trouble shooting
- Daily maintenance

DISCLOSURES

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REFERENCES

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