

Pointers For Parents

A New Horizon For Children With Hearing Loss

(NAPSA)—A national study conducted by the Better Hearing Institute found that an estimated 1.4 million American youths (infancy to age 21) have hearing loss. The impact of this common yet preventable disability is evident in the classroom, where affected children struggle to learn and communicate alongside their nonhearing-impaired peers. However, there is encouraging news on the horizon, thanks in part to the nonprofit Hear the World Foundation and a unique school in Pretoria, South Africa.

Established in 2002 by Nelson Mandela and hearing system manufacturer Phonak, the Eduplex school integrates elementary school-age students who are hard of hearing into a normal classroom setting through a revolutionary teaching method known as the Natural Auditory Oral Approach (NAOA). The approach is based on the concept that children with hearing loss learn best when taught alongside children with normal hearing, thereby receiving information through their ears, rather than by the assistance of sign language and other teaching and communication tools.

In January 2007, the Hear the World Foundation—created to support initiatives related to the topic of hearing and provide hearing technology to those in need—joined with Eduplex to develop the “Teach for Better Hearing” program. Through this initiative, teachers from around the world participate in a two-week training program at the South African school.

“Hearing loss can create a physical, emotional and social

Hearing Loss Prevention Tips For Parents

- Educate yourself about potential threats to your child's hearing.
- Schedule a comprehensive hearing examination once a year.
- Provide children with hearing protection when appropriate and encourage them to keep their distance from any potentially damaging sound sources.
- If your child uses MP3 players or other portable media devices, consider the use of sound-isolating earphones.
- Seek the advice of your hearing health care professional immediately if you notice any sudden changes in your child's hearing.



barrier, leaving affected children isolated from classmates,” said Jean Wandel, a consultant for the Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and a participant in the “Teach for Better Hearing” program.

The training program covers topics such as the philosophy and implementation of the principles of the NAOA, the importance of parental involvement, as well as the benefits of small groups, tutorials, individual conversations, and auditory learning and language development sessions.

“The innovative teaching style at Eduplex has the opportunity to change the way children with hearing loss are taught in America and around the world,” said Wandel.

For more information about hearing loss and Eduplex, visit www.hear-the-world.com. Visitors to the site can also participate in a free online hearing screening.