

PROVIDENCE



SPEECH
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CENTER

For Immediate Release

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Providence Speech and Hearing Center applauds “Communication Takes Care”

National campaign highlights potential impact of increased personal technology devices on children’s communication health and development

ORANGE, Calif., May 2, 2016 – Are you concerned that your kids spend too much time on tablets, smartphones, or other personal electronic devices? Do you have fewer conversations with your kids than you’d like because of technology distractions? Do you find yourself constantly asking your kids to lower the volume on devices because you can hear the music blaring through their earbuds or headphones?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, you are a typical parent in the digital age. These are struggles for most of us as technology becomes increasingly central to our lives and our children’s lives.

Each year, during May, we celebrate **Better Hearing and Speech Month**. But all year long, we want to remind you of the important roles that verbal communication and personal interaction—free from technology distractions—play in children’s academic and social development.

These days, kids are using devices for hours every day—time that once was reserved for talking and reading, interactive and imaginative play, outdoor experiences, and other activities. Yet, the primary way young children develop their speech and language abilities is through verbal exchange—talking and reading with parents. This is a precursor for their reading abilities and overall academic success. Children also learn from hands-on experiences. Educational apps can play a part, but they are in no way a replacement for what is learned through person-to-person communication. As we head into the summer months, when children no doubt will have more time to use devices, consider carving out some device-free time each day. You may be surprised by how little they (and you) miss it!

Another pressing issue related to technology use is hearing damage. Unfortunately, there has been a significant spike in hearing loss in young people in recent years. This coincides with the rise in popularity of mp3 players, tablets, and other devices. Even mild hearing loss can lead to reduced academic achievement (particularly in reading and math), poor self-concept, and

feelings of social isolation, among other consequences—so, encourage your kids to keep the volume on their devices to half level and to take listening breaks. Hearing loss due to unsafe listening habits can be prevented, but once it occurs, it is irreversible. Teach—and model—these good habits early.

Finally, we would like to remind you about our services should you have any concerns about your child’s communication development. Speech, language and hearing disorders are among the most common disorders in school-aged children. Communication disorders are also treatable and some can even be prevented if identified early. Contact us today if you suspect a problem.

At Providence, we encourage everyone—regardless of age—to get a **baseline hearing screening**. Stop by one of our hearing centers for an assessment today! Since early intervention is key, our expert audiologists will recommend the best course of action for you or your child. For office locations and directions, visit us online at pshc.org. To schedule an appointment at any of our eight convenient locations, call us at (714) 639-4990.

About Providence Speech and Hearing Center

Founded in 1965, Providence Speech and Hearing Center is the leading service provider to the speech and hearing impaired of Orange County and beyond, offering a wide-range of speech, hearing and language services to adults and children. Providence accepts most major insurance companies and medical groups, as well as providing grants, scholarships and financing options for patients from low-income families who are uninsured or under-insured. The Providence family also includes Orange County Fall Prevention and Balance Center and Word & Brown Hearing Center. The organization’s mission is *Enriching Life Through the Gifts of Speech and Hearing*.

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To volunteer or donate, contact Danielle Sheets at (714) 602-2933, or for media inquiries, contact Kathy Corpuz at (949) 600-9967, or e-mail kcorpuz@pshc.org.