

Deaf & Hard of Hearing Program at Forest Elementary School

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Welcome to the Deaf/Hard of Hearing Early Childhood and Elementary Program at Forest Elementary School

Hearing loss and its adverse impact on spoken language access can result in barriers to academic and vocational success and feelings of social isolation. The NSSEO Program for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing is designed to provide intensive academic, language, listening, and speech instruction that address the unique educational needs of students. The program focuses intensely on developing a way each student's unique voice can be heard. By learning with like peers, students develop the important communication and social skills that assist them in becoming contributing members of society.

Program Design

The Early Childhood and Elementary Programs located at Forest Elementary School use a combination of specially-designed instructional approaches and grade-level curricula.

Early Childhood Program

Young children learn best by doing. Through play-based activities and teacher-led lessons, students explore, experiment, discover, solve problems, master skills, and build self-esteem in a warm, caring, and structured educationally environment. To address the unique, individual needs of students, the early childhood classrooms use two distinctly different best-practice methodologies. In the oral classroom, students are taught by experienced staff trained in the oral method of instruction. In the total communication classroom, students are taught by experienced staff who are trained in the total communication method of instruction. All students have opportunities to interact with hearing students who serve as language models and communication partners. In addition, all students participate in field trips and other school events with general education students.

Elementary School Program

Language instruction is an integral part of the elementary school program. Thematic units focus on the development of speech, listening, vocabulary, syntax, and language skills. Specific learning activities are modified to accommodate the individual needs of each student while addressing the goals in his or her Individual Educational Plan (IEP). Students have opportunities for integration in general education classrooms and participate in co-taught classes for science and social students.

Who We Are

The certified/licensed staff is comprised of highly qualified teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing, interpreters, audiologists, ALD technician, speech language pathologists, school psychologists, social workers, and physical/occupational therapists. All team members are trained in communication methodologies to support students in their learning environment. The team is knowledgeable and experienced in amplification, cochlear implants, and the impact of a hearing loss on language, speech, and academic development. Highly qualified paraprofessionals are an integral part of the program and work closely with the certified/licensed staff in providing assistance to students that supports programmatic and individual needs.

Instructional Focus

- Access to general education curriculum through individualization and adaptation of core academic programs.
- Research-based curriculum and instruction in literacy, math, science, and social studies.
- Intensive communication and language development including the use of oral communication, total communication, visual supports, and aural training.
- Assistive and instructional technology to provide individualized access to learning, promoting greater independence.
- Positive behavioral supports (PBIS) that foster students' self-confidence, independence, and positive attitude towards learning.
- Participation with same-age peers in academic and social settings.
- Life skills instruction that addresses social, communication, daily living, and leisure/recreational skills.
- Opportunities for participation in building-wide activities, including field trips and assemblies.
- A collaborative partnership between program and family that enhances students' communication development and success.
- Audiological support to assess student's degree of hearing loss and impact on learning, make recommendations, and provide support.
- The Assistive Listening Device (ALD) Technician provides support to staff and students to create an optimum listening environment for students.

Program Supports

- Audiological services.
- Assistive listening devices.
- Consultation and coaching
- Experiential learning at Sunrise Lake Outdoor Education Center
- Instructional technology
- Sign language classes for families
- Partnerships with special recreation associations
- Sign Language Interpreters.

