



Sound Start

An Early Intervention Auditory/Verbal
Program for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

SAVANNAH
SPEECH & HEARING
CENTER

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speechandhearingsav.org



Early Intervention for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

The mission of Sound Start is to teach children who are deaf or hard of hearing to listen, speak, and understand spoken language so they can succeed in a mainstream educational setting.

In response to a growing need in our community, Sound Start was launched in 2007 as a free, early intervention auditory-verbal program for young children with hearing loss. Each child in the program uses advanced hearing technology, such as cochlear implants or hearing aids, to access sound and develop listening and spoken language skills. Because Sound Start is provided at no cost to families, children are able to receive life-changing early support regardless of financial circumstance.



Why Sound Start?

Sound Start is a full-time, multi-year early intervention program that helps children with hearing loss—and their families—get the most from auditory amplification.

Through early identification, daily audiological support, and consistent specialized therapy, children build listening, spoken language, and learning skills that support success in school and in life.

Occupational and Physical Therapy are provided as needed, ensuring each child receives complete, whole-child care from an experienced team.

Our Team



Sheana Richardson, Au.D.
Executive Director



Mallory King, M.A.T.
Teacher of The Deaf



Ashlee Sitzler
Deaf and Hard of Hearing Teacher's Assistant



Abby Stephens, CF-SLP
Speech Language Pathologist



Dr. Diamond Rashad, OTR/L
Occupational Therapist



Our program

Sound Start is an intensive, year-round program that meets five days a week with a student-to-teacher ratio of no more than 4:1. This allows for individualized attention and meaningful progress. Speech and language therapy is provided in both individual and group settings based on each child's needs.

Our primary focus is helping children develop independent communication through listening and spoken language, while also supporting the growth of pre-academic, pre-literacy, and social skills needed for long-term success.

Sound Start also includes Toddler & Me, a program for families with very young children who are deaf and/or newly using auditory amplification devices. Parents learn practical strategies to support their child's listening and spoken language development during the most important early years.

Since the program began, Sound Start has been provided free of charge to families, so that financial barriers never prevent a child from receiving early, life-changing support.

Means of Support

- Savannah Speech & Hearing Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Both our Center and the Sound Start program are funded through grants, community support, and public donations.
- Apogee123 is a Georgia-designated Student Scholarship Organization (SSO). Through Apogee, donors may direct their Georgia state tax credits to fund scholarships, receiving a dollar-for-dollar Georgia state income tax credit. Sound Start has been an approved Apogee scholarship recipient since 2009, helping make early intervention accessible to the families we serve.
- The Hammond for Hope Benefit for Sound Start is our annual fundraising event supporting the continued growth of the program. Donations of auction items, services, and experiences help us serve more children and families.
- Volunteering is another meaningful way to support Sound Start. Volunteers assist our teachers by engaging with our students in classroom activities and art.

For more information, we warmly invite you to contact us!



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