Considerations for the New School Year

As many people in the United States, and around the world, prepare for a new school year, every approach is different and fluid. With rapidly changing circumstances, it can be hard to know which accommodations to advocate for and even how to best adhere to current guidelines and regulations.

With the ongoing global pandemic and shifting rules and regulations for instruction models, the LSL Leading Edge sat down with Sherri Vernelson, M.Ed., LSLS Cert. AVEd, to discuss simple, practical strategies to ensure effective communication accommodations for students who are deaf and hard of hearing. She shared with us her perspective on how best to approach shifting education models. Read the full interview.

News

Celebrating the 30th Anniversary of ADA

Recently, we celebrated the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This monumental, U.S. civil rights law was passed in 1990 to prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public. AG Bell has long advocated in support of ADA, amendments to the act, and legal challenges to ensure everyone who is deaf or hard of hearing has equal access to accommodations, such as translation (via an interpreter or CART), assistive listening devices, and captioning.

"ADA continues to ensure all individuals who have a disability, including those who are deaf and hard of hearing, have access to all aspects of public life. We applaud the long-lasting effects of ADA and look forward to continuing our efforts to ensure full access and accommodation for those who are deaf and hard of hearing."

—EMILIO ALONSO-MENDOZA, AG BELL’S CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

“ADA continues to ensure all individuals who have a disability, including those who are deaf and hard of hearing, have access to all aspects of public life. We applaud the long-lasting effects of ADA and look forward to continuing our efforts to ensure full access and accommodation for those who are deaf and hard of hearing,” said Emilio Alonso-Mendoza, AG Bell’s Chief Executive Officer.

The importance of ADA lives on and we are reminded of its impact as children go back to school and their parents and educators must work to ensure access to the curriculum through accessible instruction. Or
News, continued

“ADA and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) are designed to level the playing field for children and adults who are deaf or hard of hearing, of course, need to have the same access to communication and information as typical hearing peers in the same situation.”

—GAYLA GUIGNARD,
AG BELL’S CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER

for adults who are deaf or hard of hearing when working towards solutions in providing access in the workplace or to healthcare. “ADA and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) are designed to level the playing field for children and adults who are deaf or hard of hearing who, of course, need to have the same access to communication and information as typical hearing peers in the same situation,” reflected Gayla Guignard, AG Bell’s Chief Strategy Officer.

AG Bell continues to provide resources to support parents, professionals, and adults who are deaf or hard of hearing when seeking accommodations during the COVID pandemic. These include AG Bell’s Learning at Home resource page and directing our members to other available resources such as www.connect-hear.com, a strategy repository for communication access.

For more information about ADA and communication access rights, visit www.ada.gov or www.agbell.org.

AG Bell and AG Bell Academy Board Transitions

During the AG Bell Global Virtual LSL Symposium, the chairs of the AG Bell and AG Bell Academy Board of Directors changed hands. Susan Lenihan, Ph.D., CED, will chair the AG Bell Board of Directors for the next two years. In a pre-taped video, she discusses her transition into leading the board. You can watch the full video here.

Jenna Voss, Ph.D., CED, LSLS Cert. AVEd, will serve as the chair of the AG Bell Academy Board of Directors for the next two years. Similarly, in a pre-taped interview she outlined her excitement in leading the Academy board. You can watch the full video here.

AG Bell thanks both Catharine McNally (outgoing AG Bell Board chair) and Emma Rushbrooke (outgoing AG Bell Academy Board chair) for their service and dedication in leading during these unprecedented times.

COVID-19 Response and Resources

For many families, their homes have now become more than just a home: an office, a school, a playground, and a safe haven. To better support families and professionals, AG Bell continues to gather valuable resources to keep families learning, playing, and communicating at home. Visit the AG Bell website to view the resources and updates as available.
Continuing Education Opportunities

The AG Bell Academy provides opportunities for certified Listening and Spoken Language (LSL) Specialists and those seeking certification to earn continuing education credits (CEUs) toward recertification or certification. The number of organizations providing CEU opportunities continues to rise every year. For those organizing professional development training and courses, the application process to gain approval to provide Academy CEUs is straightforward. Visit the AG Bell Academy website to learn more about applying to provide Academy CEUs for your next educational event. Current approved CEU opportunities are available across the United States, internationally and online.

Share Your Best Practices with the AG Bell Community

As the world adapts to ever-changing circumstances, it is more important than ever to stay connected to each other. That’s why we want to hear from you! Have an interesting coping strategy? A funny story about teletherapy? Sharing your story on the AG Bell Professional Blog will help others navigate life at home.

To contribute, please contact us at editor@agbell.org with your story or idea. Images are highly encouraged (along with a completed copy release form). Taking 10 minutes to write your story can make a huge difference in someone else’s isolation experience. We look forward to hearing from you!
Academy News

AG Bell Academy Leadership Survey

The AG Bell Academy for Listening and Spoken Language exists to ensure that children who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families have access to listening and spoken language services from knowledgeable, skilled, credentialed providers. The Academy wants to make this a reality for families through its mission, to advance listening and talking through standards of excellence and certification of professionals (LSLS Cert. AVEd and LSLS Cert. AVT). The work of the Academy and its leadership is focused entirely on credentialing of professionals.

The Academy depends on the strengths, skills, and passion of its leaders to move the certification program forward. The Academy has opportunities for involvement of professionals, parents and individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to participate on committees, task forces, the board, and other work. We hope you will consider completing this survey as you have been identified as someone with leadership skills and/or potential!

By the Numbers (as of 8/1/2020)

955
Certified LSL Specialists worldwide

692
Certified LSL Specialists in the United States

263
Certified LSL Specialists in other countries

Share our pride and congratulations as we celebrate the following new certified LSL Specialists:

- Sharon Fairbourn, LSLS Cert. AVEd
- Abaries Farhad, LSLS Cert. AVT
- Elizabeth Fisher, LSLS Cert. AVT
- Maria Flores, LSLS Cert. AVEd
- Amanda Grant, LSLS Cert. AVT
- Natalie Higgins, LSLS Cert. AVEd
- Eka Hikmat, LSLS Cert. AVT
- Kasie LeBlanc, LSLS Cert. AVEd
- Magdalena Massone, LSLS Cert. AVT
- Leah McPherson, LSLS Cert. AVEd
- Sofia Mercado, LSLS Cert. AVT
- Majken Mikkelsen, LSLS Cert. AVT
- Hyun Young Parker, LSLS Cert. AVT
- Kimberlee Ramirez, LSLS Cert. AVT
- Cecile Santos-Ayrault, LSLS Cert. AVEd
- Sarah Spencer, LSLS Cert. AVT
- Christina Talbot, LSLS Cert. AVT

This survey should take approximately 30 minutes to complete and can be accessed here: https://bit.ly/2PtFs3a.