



Aleisha Davis – The Shepherd Centre

Presentation: Clinical observations of speech, language and literacy acquisition patterns for children with hearing loss

For many years we have concentrated on measuring the outcomes for children with hearing loss by standardised speech, language and vocabulary scores. This evidence base has clearly indicated early decisions are key to later outcomes, and advances in the early detection and identification of hearing loss, early fitting of optimal amplification devices and participation in early intervention programs are increasingly associated with age appropriate skills maintained from birth through to school entry. In early education and intervention programs, we often see patterns in children's performance in subsets of these standardised tests and assessment areas that aren't visible when reporting on aggregate outcome data.

This presentation will explore these clinical observations and insights across the areas of speech, language and literacy for children enrolled in an early intervention program with all levels of hearing loss and who use a range of devices, by clinicians who have been working with children with hearing loss over many years. Particular language tasks that will be discussed include recalling sentences; plural acquisition, pronouns, expressive word classes, persuasion skills, and following directions. Differences in speech acquisition patterns to typical hearing children include distortions of 's', gliding, backing and vowel errors. Difficulties with literacy acquisition will be discussed with relation to syllable isolation and first sound identification tasks. Reflections will be made with respect to access to sound and listening demands for these tasks, potential research opportunities, and intervention that could be used to support children's development in these specific areas of challenge for children with hearing loss.

Biography

Aleisha is General Manager of Clinical Programs and a Certified Listening and Spoken Language Specialist and practising Speech Pathologist. Aleisha joined [The Shepherd Centre](#) in 2003 after completing her Masters in Applied Linguistics at Cambridge University in the UK. Aleisha leads the Senior Clinical team to implement the programs across the centres, through the cross matrix multidisciplinary team of Listening & Spoken Language Specialists, Child & Family Counsellors and Researchers & Assessors. Aleisha is currently undertaking her PhD through Macquarie University and the Hearing CRC on Language Acquisition in Children's Hearing Loss and is looking forward to this contributing to improved intervention technologies and strategies for progression, and an evidence base for parents to guide their decision making. Aleisha received the 2016 State Finalist Award for leadership in the 2016 NSW Business Chamber Awards. This prestigious award recognizes Aleisha's leadership in the field of childhood hearing loss, particularly her strong work in research and clinical practice, reflecting her passionate commitment to providing the best outcomes for children and families living with hearing loss.