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APPROVED PROVIDER

Nebraska
Speech-Language-Hearing
Association

This program is offered for up to 1.00 ASHA CEUs (various instructional levels), including Poster Sessions.

Additional ASHA Certification Maintenance Requirements:

- Ethics: 0.25 ASHA CEUs
- Cultural and Linguistic Diversity (CLD): 0.20 ASHA CEUs

NSLHA 2026

NEBRASKA SPEECH-LANGUAGE-HEARING ASSOCIATION
CONVENTION

October 8-9, 2026

NIC Conference Center, Lincoln, NE



Innovate. Communicate. Connect.



– NSLHA Fall Convention Registration Form –

Thursday & Friday, October 8 - 9, 2026

NIC Conference Center, Lincoln , NE

Check one: ☐ Student ☐ Audiology ☐ SLP / School ☐ SLP / Medical

☐ **I wish to earn ASHA CEUs for this course.** *By checking this box, I understand that I am giving NSLHA permission to send my information to ASHA CE. **If this box is left unchecked, my information will not be sent to ASHA.**

Your Name: _____ Credentials: _____

First Name For Badge: _____ ASHA #: _____

Company/Organization/University: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Cell: _____ Email: _____

Your Emergency Contact: _____ Phone: _____

Registration includes all presentations, meals, and refreshment breaks.

PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATION FEES:

☐ In-Person ☐ Virtual – Member \$250.00

☐ In-Person ☐ Virtual – Non-Member \$385.00

Dietary Restrictions: ☐ Vegetarian ☐ Gluten-Free

STUDENT REGISTRATION FEES:

☐ In-Person ☐ Virtual \$ 75.00

Dietary Restrictions: ☐ Vegetarian ☐ Gluten-Free

☐ YES ☐ NO I will attend the Student Share Fair

☐ YES ☐ NO I will volunteer at the convention

ADD MY MEMBERSHIP FEES:

☐ FULL ☐ ASSOCIATE ☐ AFFILIATE \$135.00

☐ FIRST-YEAR PROFESSIONAL \$ 70.00

☐ LIFETIME ☐ STUDENT \$ 50.50

TOTALS: – NO REFUNDS FOR CANCELLATIONS AFTER OCTOBER 1, 2026 –

Registration Fee \$ _____

Membership Fee \$ _____

Donate to the NEBRASKA SPEECH-LANGUAGE-HEARING ENDOWMENT FUND \$ _____

TOTAL DUE (Make Checks payable to NSLHA) \$ _____

Pay with your Credit Card:

Please list Card Number: _____

Expiration Date: _____ Security Code: _____

Billing Address (if different than above): _____

Email (required for receipt): _____

RETURN TO:

Nebraska Speech Language Hearing Association

8700 Executive Woods Dr, Suite 400 | Lincoln, NE 68512-9612

OR: REGISTER ONLINE AT NSLHA.ORG

To earn ASHA CEUs for this convention, participants must attend the convention sessions in their entirety and complete the required self-assessment and reflection. Only those who fulfill both requirements will be reported to ASHA for satisfactory completion and awarded the appropriate number of Continuing Education Units (CEUs).

2026 NSLHA Fall Convention Parking Info

Parking Information at Nebraska Innovation Campus:

Parking is available at Nebraska Innovation Campus in Zone 9900. Attendees are responsible for their own parking fees.

Live/In Person: For attendees joining us in person in Lincoln, the event will be held at Nebraska Innovation Campus, located at 2021 Transformation Dr., Lincoln, NE.

To make parking easier, please download the **Passport Parking app** from the Google Play Store or Apple App Store before arriving.

Lot: Zone 9900



Tentative Agenda



2026 Convention

October 8-9, 2026

Wednesday, October 7, 2026

Time	Presentation	Speaker	Meeting Location
6:30-9:00 PM	Student Share Fair		
6:30 PM	NSLHA Board Meeting		

AUDIOLOGY SCHEDULE OF EVENTS – Thursday, October 8, 2026

Time	Presentation	Speaker	Meeting Location
7:00-8:00 AM	Registration (Breakfast on Your Own)		NIC Main Entrance
8:00-9:00 AM	General Session – From Clinician to Champion: Leadership and Advocacy in Communication Disorders	Derek Stiles, PhD	Auditorium
9:00-10:00 AM	NSLHA Member Meeting		Auditorium
10:00-10:30 AM	Break and Visit Exhibits		Banquet Hall
10:30-11:30 AM	Audiology 2050: The need for state scope of practice modernization	Nikki Kopetzky, AuD	A-1, 2, 3
11:30-1:00 PM	Lunch Provided for Attendees and Visit Exhibits		Banquet Hall
11:30-1:00 PM	Poster Sessions		Banquet Hall
1:00-2:00 PM	Code Changes: Today and Tomorrow	Leisha Eiten, AuD, CCC-A, CH-TM	A-1, 2, 3
2:00-3:00 PM	How Children Perceive Space: Establishing Norms and Advancing Vestibular Testing in Children	Melissa Hazen, PhD, MSc, CCC-A	A-1, 2, 3
3:00-3:30 PM	Break and Visit Exhibits		Banquet Hall
3:30-4:30 PM	Navigating Hearing Loss and Multilingualism: Emotional and Lived Experiences of Spanish-Speaking Mothers (CLD =.1 CE)	Samantha Steier, MS, CCC-SLP Natalie Mason, MS, CCC-SLP Candice Mullendore, MS, OTRL/L	A-1, 2, 3
4:30-5:00 PM	The new SLP CPT Codes. What you need to know before January 1, 2027	Mary Walsh-Sterup, OTR/L, CHT Jessica Thoene, MS Ed, CCC-SLP	B-1, 2, 3

SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY SCHOOL SCHEDULE OF EVENTS – Thursday, October 8, 2026

Time	Presentation	Speaker	Meeting Location
7:00-8:00 AM	Registration (Breakfast on Your Own)		NIC Main Entrance
8:00-9:00 AM	General Session –From Clinician to Champion: Leadership and Advocacy in Communication Disorders	Derek Stiles, PhD	Auditorium
9:00-10:00 AM	NSLHA Member Meeting		Auditorium
10:00-10:30 AM	Break and Visit Exhibits		Banquet Hall
10:30-11:30 AM	We've Been Doing it Backwards - It Starts With Us -- Why the Most Powerful Tool in any Therapy Room is a Confident, Regulated Adult	Treva Graves, MA, CCC-SLP	Auditorium
11:30-1:00 PM	Lunch Provided for Attendees and Visit Exhibits		Banquet Hall
11:30-1:00 PM	Poster Sessions		Banquet Hall
1:00-2:00 PM	It's Not Just Apples to Apples: Understanding the Job Hunt	Daniel Bombeck, MS, CCC-SLP Joe Haney, MS, CCC-SLP	Auditorium
2:00-3:00 PM	Verb learning in developmental language disorder	Justin Kueser, PhD, CCC-SLP	Auditorium
3:00-3:30 PM	Break and Visit Exhibits		Banquet Hall
3:30-5:00 PM	Panel Session: Building AAC Systems of Support: Implementation Models Across Different Educational Settings	A Aksamit, MS, CCC-SLP/ P Daberkow, MS, CCC-SLP/AAC / M Green, MS, CCC-SLP / H Hamze, MA, CCC-SLP / R Topp, MA, ATP / Kim Bowen, ATP	Auditorium

SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY MEDICAL SCHEDULE OF EVENTS – Thursday, October 8, 2026

Time	Presentation	Speaker	Meeting Location
7:00-8:00 AM	Registration (Breakfast on Your Own)		NIC Main Entrance
8:00-9:00 AM	General Session – From Clinician to Champion: Leadership and Advocacy in Communication Disorders	Derek Stiles, PhD	Auditorium
9:00-10:00 AM	NSLHA Member Meeting		Auditorium
10:00-10:30 AM	Break and Visit Exhibits		Banquet Hall
10:30-11:30 AM	Compliance or Choice? Rethinking Diet Modification and Informed Consent (Ethics =.1 CE)	Kellie Brink, MS, CCC-SLP	B-1, 2, 3
11:30-1:00 PM	Lunch Provided for Attendees and Visit Exhibits		Banquet Hall
11:30-1:00 PM	Poster Sessions		Banquet Hall
1:00-2:00 PM	Reclaiming Identity and Intimacy: The Role of the Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) in Sexual Health After Neurologic Injury (CLD =.1 CE)	Zoey Bertsch, MA, CCC-SLP Kelsey Wagner, MS, CCC-SLP	B-1, 2, 3
2:00-3:00 PM	Cognitive Therapy for Aging Adults	Kayla Korth, MA, CCC-SLP	B-1, 2, 3
3:00-3:30 PM	Break and Visit Exhibits		Banquet Hall
3:30-4:30 PM	Beyond Picky Eating: Identifying and Treating Pediatric Feeding Disorders in Everyday Practice	Riley Love, CCC-SLP	B-1, 2, 3
4:30-5:00 PM	The new SLP CPT Codes. What you need to know before January 1, 2027	Candice Mullendore, MS, OTRL/L Mary Walsh-Sterup, OTR/L, CHT Jessica Thoene, MS Ed, CCC-SLP	B-1, 2, 3

Joint Sessions in Light Gray

Tentative Agenda

AUDIOLOGY SCHEDULE OF EVENTS – Friday, October 9, 2026

Time	Presentation	Speaker	Meeting Location
7:00-8:00 AM	Registration (Breakfast on Your Own)		NIC Main Entrance
8:00-9:30 AM	General Session – Licensure, Certification, and Professional Identity: Understanding the Systems That Shape SLP Practice (Ethics =.15 CE)	Megan Berg, SLP	Auditorium
9:30-9:45 AM	Break		Banquet Hall
9:45-11:45	General Session – Clinical Supervision in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology	Lisa Lenz, MA, CCC-SLP Laura Moody, MS, CCC-SLP	Auditorium
11:45-12:00 PM	Break		Banquet Hall
12:00-1:00 PM	Reducing Barriers to Hearing Healthcare: The Role of Hearing Aid Banks and the Nebraska Model	Stacie Ray, AuD Mariela Grijalva, MS	A-1, 2, 3
1:00 PM	Adjourn		

SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY SCHOOL SCHEDULE OF EVENTS – Friday, October 9, 2026

Time	Presentation	Speaker	Meeting Location
7:00-8:00 AM	Registration (Breakfast on Your Own)		NIC Main Entrance
8:00-9:30 AM	General Session – Licensure, Certification, and Professional Identity: Understanding the Systems That Shape SLP Practice (Ethics =.15 CE)	Megan Berg, SLP	Auditorium
9:30-9:45 AM	Break		Banquet Hall
9:45-11:45	General Session – Clinical Supervision in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology	Lisa Lenz, MA, CCC-SLP Laura Moody, MS, CCC-SLP	Auditorium
11:45-12:00 PM	Break		Banquet Hall
12:00-1:00 PM	From Appointment to Everyday: Closing the Loop Between Clinical Care and Daily Life for Neurodivergent Children	Jenilee Woltman, MS Ed, CCC-SLP	Auditorium
1:00 PM	Adjourn		

SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY MEDICAL SCHEDULE OF EVENTS – Friday, October 9, 2026

Time	Presentation	Speaker	Meeting Location
7:00-8:00 AM	Registration (Breakfast on Your Own)		NIC Main Entrance
8:00-9:30 AM	General Session – Licensure, Certification, and Professional Identity: Understanding the Systems That Shape SLP Practice (Ethics =.15 CE)	Megan Berg, SLP	Auditorium
9:30-9:45 AM	Break		Banquet Hall
9:45-11:45	General Session – Clinical Supervision in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology	Lisa Lenz, MA, CCC-SLP Laura Moody, MS, CCC-SLP	Auditorium
11:45-12:00 PM	Break		Banquet Hall
12:00-1:00 PM	Pitch Perfect: The SLP's Guide to Getting Corporate Greenlights for Clinical Programming	Lindsay Larkin, MS, CCC-SLP Natalie Douglas, PhD	B-1, 2, 3
1:00 PM	Adjourn		

Joint Sessions in Light Gray

NETWORKING AT THE BARRED OWL, SCARLET HOTEL, THURSDAY, 5:00 PM



Megan Berg, SLP

Licensure, Certification, and Professional Identity: Understanding the Systems That Shape SLP Practice

Speech-language pathologists practice within overlapping systems of state licensure, national certification, graduate education standards, and professional governance. Yet many clinicians receive little formal education about how these systems developed, how they function today, or how they influence clinical autonomy, public protection, and professional identity.

This session draws from themes explored in the Inside SLP podcast to examine the historical roots and current structure of SLP credentialing in the United States. Participants will explore the distinctions between state licensure and national certification, the origins of the CCC, and the evolving tensions between regulation, portability, specialization, and public safety.

Rather than advocating for a singular position, this presentation invites clinicians to develop a clearer understanding of the systems that shape their work. Attendees will leave with historical context, practical language for discussing credentialing with employers and colleagues, and a more informed framework for engaging in ongoing professional dialogue.

Learning Objectives:

- Describe how state licensure and national certification systems developed and explain their roles in supporting ethical practice, professional accountability, and public protection.
- Analyze the ethical responsibilities of SLPs related to accurate representation of credentials, qualifications, and scope of practice.
- Evaluate ethical considerations arising from tensions in credentialing systems, including portability, specialization, professional autonomy, and access to services.
- Apply principles from the ASHA Code of Ethics to clinical and professional scenarios involving licensure, certification, employer expectations, and public communication.

Megan Berg is a speech-language pathologist and founder of Therapy Insights. She earned her master of arts in speech-language pathology from the University of Colorado. Megan is the owner of Therapy Insights and the producer of the Inside SLP podcast, a series examining the history, structure, and future of speech-language pathology training, licensing, and credentialing in the United States.

Her work explores the complex relationship between state licensure, national certification, graduate education standards, and professional governance. Known for her thoughtful, research-informed approach, Megan brings nuance and curiosity to conversations about professional identity, public protection, and the evolving systems that shape clinical practice. Through her writing, speaking, and resource development, she aims to foster informed dialogue that supports both clinicians and the communities they serve.

Speaker Financial Disclosure Statement: Megan Berg is the founder and owner of Therapy Insights and host of the Inside SLP podcast, where she explores topics related to speech-language pathology licensing, credentialing, and professional identity. She is also involved in the PACT Survey, which examines SLP training, professional development, and the evolving identity of the profession.

Speaker Non-Financial Disclosure Statement: Megan Berg is the founder and owner of Therapy Insights and host of the Inside SLP podcast, where she explores topics related to speech-language pathology licensing, credentialing, and professional identity. She is also involved in the PACT Survey, which examines SLP training, professional development, and the evolving identity of the profession.

Lisa Lenz, MA, CCC-SLP

Laura Moody, MS, CCC-SLP

Clinical Supervision in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology

This presentation will include the ASHA requirements for clinical supervision, a discussion of key components of high-quality supervision, and descriptions of effective feedback and various supervisory styles and behaviors. This presentation meets the professional development requirement for ASHA's supervision qualification but is open to all NSLHA attendees for general professional development credit.

Learning Objectives:

- Describe ASHA's requirements for the supervision of students and assistants.
- List two benefits of supervising students and assistants.
- Name two components of effective feedback.

Lisa Lenz earned her undergraduate degree in English at Lipscomb University and her master's degree in speech-language pathology from Indiana University. She has served pediatric and adult populations and has experience in interprofessional practice and education, supervision, clinical research, mentorship, and service learning/study abroad. Since 2018, Lisa has served as a graduate lecturer and the SLP externship coordinator for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Educational Administration at UNL.

Laura Moody is the Director of Clinical Education at the University of Nebraska-Kearney (UNK). She received her master's degree from UNK and then practiced in a pediatric outpatient clinic before returning to UNK as a Lecturer and Clinical Educator in 2012. Her interests are in the areas of supervision and training graduate students, including telepractice speech-language services and online education.

Speaker Financial Disclosure Statement: Lisa Lenz is employed by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Laura Moody is employed by the University of Nebraska-Kearney.

Speaker Non-Financial Disclosure Statement: Lisa Lenz serves as a member of the Continuing Education Committee for NSLHA. Laura Moody has no non-financial relationships to disclose.

Derek Stiles, PhD

From Clinician to Champion: Leadership and Advocacy in Communication Disorders

Advocacy and leadership can become some of the most meaningful parts of your career as a speech-language pathologist or audiologist. This session will focus on skill development in advocacy, leadership, and volunteerism related to the professions of speech-language pathology and audiology. We will discuss strategies for successful advocacy, opportunities to lead, and ways to get involved. Issues described in ASHA's Public Policy Agenda (PPA) will be highlighted as well as strategies for how speech-language pathologists and audiologists can become involved in advocacy efforts to ensure favorable outcomes for members and consumers in Nebraska.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify up to 3 skills acquired through ASHA's Leadership Development Program (LDP)
- Describe 2 mentoring opportunities through ASHA
- Identify up to 3 factors to be considered when making a legislative visit

Derek Stiles, PhD, is a pediatric audiologist with over 20 years of experience in pediatric diagnostics, hearing technology, and interdisciplinary clinical leadership. He serves as Director of Audiology and Co-Director of the Center for Communication Enhancement at Boston Children's Hospital, where he leads multi site teams and drives strategic initiatives in quality improvement, documentation standards, and equitable access to care. His work integrates budgeting, operations, and strategic planning to advance clinical innovation, including clinical dashboards and guidelines now used throughout Boston Children's, as well as a national collaboration on audiology productivity metrics. Dr. Stiles holds adjunct faculty appointments at Harvard Medical School and currently serves as Vice President for Finance on the Board of Directors of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. He earned his PhD in Speech and Hearing Science from the University of Iowa.

Speaker Financial Disclosure Statement: Derek Stiles is employed by Boston Children's Hospital and is on the ASHA Board of Directors. Travel and Lodging were covered by ASHA. Registration was waived by NSLHA.

Speaker Non-Financial Disclosure Statement: Derek Stiles has no nonfinancial relationships to disclose.

Leisha Eiten, AuD, CCC-A, CH-TM

Code Changes: Today and Tomorrow

Significant coding changes have occurred in 2026 and more coding changes are ahead for Audiologists. The purpose of this presentation is to 1. Review the new Hearing Devices Services Code Family and how this has impacted Audiology billing and reimbursement systems. 2. Discuss additional coding changes that are on the horizon in 2027 and beyond.

Learning Objectives:

- Locate support and resources to assist with implementing the new Hearing Device Service codes
- Identify code changes occurring in 2027 to be prepared for reimbursement and billing changes

Leisha received her MA in Audiology from the University of Iowa and her AuD from ATSU through the Arizona School of Health Sciences. She has been employed at Boys Town National Research Hospital since 1990 and is currently the Director Specialty Clinics. She is a member of ASHA's Health Care Economics Committee and is ASHA's Audiology advisor to the American Medical Association's Relative Value Update Committee - Health Care Professionals Advisory Committee (AMA RUC-HCPAC). She is Co-Chair of the RUC-HCPAC and RUC panel member. She is a past president of the Nebraska Speech-Language-Hearing Association and is member of NSLHA's Insurance and Reimbursement committee.

Speaker Financial Disclosure Statement: Leisha is employed by Boys Town National Research Hospital. She is reimbursed for travel expenses related to ASHA HCEC and RUC responsibilities.

Speaker Non-Financial Disclosure Statement: Lisa Eiten has no non-financial relationships to disclose.

Melssa Hazen, PhD, MSc, Aud-CCC

How Children Perceive Space: Establishing Norms and Advancing Vestibular Testing in Children

In this study, we established the first normative subjective visual vertical (SVV) data in children aged 5 to 13 (n = 26) using full-body tilt. SVV is a measure of perceived verticality and reflects central integration of vestibular, visual, and proprioceptive inputs, yet pediatric norms are presently underdeveloped. We compared SVV measured in a rotary chair (0° head position) to a novel virtual reality (VR) based paradigm conducted at 0° and ±30° full-body tilt. In parallel, we assessed vestibular perception using rotary chair motion to determine feasibility and the minimum number of trials required to obtain reliable thresholds in children, with the goal of reducing testing burden. This study evaluates the validity of VR-SVV as an accessible and mobile clinical tool while also optimizing efficiency in vestibular perception testing. Together, these findings aim to inform the development of more practical, child-friendly, and scalable vestibular assessment protocols for clinical and research settings.

Learning Objectives:

- Describe how subjective visual vertical (SVV) and vestibular perception metrics are important in clinical practice.
- Compare the accuracy of SVV measurements using a rotary chair versus virtual-reality based methods.
- Design a perceptual threshold assessment for pediatric patients using the minimum number of trials.

Melissa Hazen, PhD, MSc, CCC-A, is a postdoctoral research fellow at Boys Town National Research Hospital specializing in pediatric vestibular science and developmental outcomes in children with hearing, vestibular, and balance impairments. She completed her PhD at the University of Toronto, where her research focused on the relationships between hearing loss, vestibular function, balance, and cognition in children with cochlear implants. She is also a clinical audiologist at SickKids Hospital in Toronto, where she has contributed to the development and expansion of pediatric vestibular services. Her research examines how vestibular involvement and comorbidities shape motor, cognitive, and academic outcomes, with a focus on identifying subclinical dysfunction and developing targeted rehabilitation strategies to improve functional outcomes.

Not Presenting: Kristen Janky, PhD, AuD; Jessie Patterson, PhD, AuD; Andrew Wagner, PhD, DPT

Speaker Financial Disclosure Statement: Melissa Hazen is employed by Boys Town National Research Hospital.

Speaker Non-Financial Disclosure Statement: Melissa Hazen has no non financial relationships to disclose.

Nikki Kopetzky, AuD

Audiology 2050: The need for state scope of practice modernization

This presentation will provide a comprehensive overview of the critical need to modernize the audiology scope of practice in Nebraska to align with current national standards and evolving models of care. Attendees will gain a clear understanding of the gaps between existing state regulations and contemporary audiology practice, and how these gaps may impact access to care and patient outcomes.

The session will also demystify the legislative process required to enact scope of practice changes, offering a practical roadmap for how such efforts move from concept to law. Participants will learn about the essential roles that state associations, licensing boards, and national professional organizations play in advocating for and achieving meaningful regulatory updates.

In addition, real-world case examples from other states will be highlighted to illustrate how scope modernization has led to enhanced standards of care, improved access to services, and better patient outcomes. By the end of the session, attendees will be equipped with the knowledge and context needed to actively engage in and support scope of practice modernization efforts within Nebraska.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand Audiology 2050 and the need for scope modernization for audiology in the state of Nebraska
- Understand the Nebraska legislative process to achieve scope of practice modernization
- Understand how scope modernization has elevated the practice of audiology in other states
- Understand what audiologists in Nebraska can do to support scope of practice modernization

Dr. Nikki Kopetzky received her Doctorate of Audiology from Salus University after completing her Bachelor of Science and Masters degrees at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She spent 15 years focusing on medical and pediatric audiology at one of Nebraska's largest ENT clinics. In 2020, she opened Active Hearing Health in Omaha, NE where she serves all ages and specializes in both hearing and balance disorders. Dr. Kopetzky currently serves as Secretary and Director-at-Large for on the ADA board of directors, is the VP of Legislative Affairs for the NE Speech Language Hearing Association (NSLHA), and serves on the Nebraska Hearing Instrument Specialist Licensing Board.

Speaker Financial Disclosure Statement: Nikki Kopetzky is co-owner of Active Hearing Health.

Speaker Non-Financial Disclosure Statement: Nikki Kopetzky is on the board of directors for ADA and on the board of directors for NSLHA. She is also a member of the Nebraska Hearing Instrument Specialist (NE HIS) Licensing board. She is not representing the views or opinions of the NE HIS Licensing board today.

Candice Mullendore, MS, OTR/L
Mary Walsh-Sterup, OTR/L, CHT
Jessica Thoene, MS Ed, CCC-SLP

The new SLP CPT Codes. What you need to know before January 1, 2027

Speech language pathologists in every setting are facing the biggest coding change in decades. The single, untimed CPT code, 92507, is being replaced by 10 new CPT codes that are disorder specific and time based. In this 30 minute session, we will walk through what is confirmed, what is pending and the steps every SLP should be taking now.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify the differences between the current 92507 CPT code and the 10 new disorder specific, time based CPT codes
- Name 2 steps to prepare clinical documentation and scheduled for the January 1, 2027 transition

Candice Mullendore is the owner of Pediatric Therapy Center and co-founder of THE Therapy Practice Advisory group which offers paid continuing education, including content related to the topics discussed in this presentation.

Mary brings more than 35 years of experience in clinical practice, healthcare management, policy development, and regulatory compliance as an occupational therapist, certified hand therapist, and compliance leader. As former co-owner of a large multidisciplinary therapy practice spanning 17

outpatient locations, hospital partnerships, and 68+ school districts in Nebraska, she led delivery of PT, OT, and speech services across diverse care settings. Mary is widely recognized for her expertise in healthcare compliance, billing, and coding, having helped develop Powerhouse Billing, a therapy-specialty billing company where she continues to advise. She was appointed to the Health Care Professionals Advisory Committee (HCPAC) and recently elected Alternate Co-Chair of the HCPAC to the RUC, bringing deep advisory-level knowledge of CPT coding structures and the RUC valuation process. Mary has also served as Board Chair of the Nebraska Board of Occupational Therapy.

Jessica Thoene, M.S.Ed., CCC-SLP, is a speech-language pathologist with more than 20 years of experience across private practice, long-term care, home health, acute care, and cash-pay services. She previously owned a multidisciplinary private practice for 20 years providing PT, OT, and speech-language services, developing deep expertise in business operations, healthcare policy, and insurance reimbursement. A dedicated advocate for the SLP profession, Jessica has presented nationally at the APTA National Conference and frequently at NSLHA's Annual Convention on insurance, reimbursement, and healthcare policy. She has served on the NSLHA Board of Directors and its Insurance Reimbursement Committee, and represented Nebraska on ASHA's STAR and SEAL committees.

Jessica helped pass approximately four bills advancing the profession. She currently serves on the Nebraska Total Care Provider Advisory Committee, working with providers and payer to strengthen access to care.

Speaker Financial Disclosure Statement: Candice Mullendore is the owner of Pediatric Therapy Center and co-founder of THE Therapy Practice Advisory group which offers paid continuing education, including content related to the topics discussed in this presentation.

Mary Walsh Sterup is Senior Advisor to THE Therapy Practice Advisory Group (TPAG), which offers paid continuing education, including content related to the topics discussed in this presentation. She also serves as an advisor to Powerhouse Billing, a therapy-specialty billing company. Jessica Thoene is owner of Alpha Rehabilitation in Kearney, NE.

Speaker Non-Financial Disclosure Statement: Candice Mullendore serves as Vice President of Policy and Advocacy for the Nebraska Occupational Therapy Association and as the alternate advisor to AOTA's HCPAC committee for the Relative Value Update Committee and the American Medical Association.

Mary Walsh Sterup serves as Alternate Co-Chair of the Health Care Professionals Advisory Committee (HCPAC) to the RUC, and has served as Board Chair of the Nebraska Board of Occupational Therapy and of Great Plains Safety and Wellness.

Jessica Thoene serves on the Nebraska Speech-Language-Hearing Association (NSLHA) Board of Directors and Insurance Reimbursement Committee, represents Nebraska on ASHA's STAR and SEAL committees, and serves on the Nebraska Total Care Provider Advisory Committee.

Stacie Ray, AuD
Mariela Grijalva, MS

Reducing Barriers to Hearing Healthcare: The Role of Hearing Aid Banks and the Nebraska Model

Access to hearing healthcare remains a significant challenge for many individuals due to financial, geographic, and service-related barriers. Hearing aid banks offer an approach to expanding access by providing hearing technology and related services to under served populations. This presentation will examine the purpose, structure, and sustainability of hearing aid banks, with a particular focus on the Nebraska Hearing Aid Bank model. Participants will explore key elements necessary for long-term sustainability, learn about recently implemented changes to improve access across Nebraska, and understand how to connect families with resources.

Learning Objectives:

- Describe the purpose and operational models of hearing aid banks as a strategy for improving access to hearing healthcare for under served populations.
- Examine key components necessary for sustainability of hearing aid bank programs, including funding, partnerships, and service delivery processes.
- Identify how to connect individuals and families with resources and services.
- Evaluate the Nebraska Hearing Aid Bank model and its impact on improving access to hearing healthcare across the lifespan.

Stacie Ray, AuD is a Professor of Practice in the College of Education and Human Sciences at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. She earned her bachelor's and master's degrees from UNL and her doctorate from Drexel University (formerly Salus University). Dr. Ray teaches and mentors future audiologists in the classroom and clinic at the Barkley Speech Language and Hearing Clinic. Her areas of emphasis include amplification and expanding access to hearing healthcare for low-mid income families. She founded HearU Nebraska in 2008 and serves as the director of the Nebraska Hearing Aid Banks.

Mariela Grijalva is a third-year Doctor of Audiology (AuD) student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She earned her bachelor's degree from New Mexico State University and her master's degree from UNL. Her professional interests include pediatric audiology, cochlear implants, auditory brainstem response (ABR) testing, and community audiology. As a graduate assistant for the Nebraska Hearing Aid Banks, she supports efforts to increase access to hearing healthcare for individuals in need.

Speaker Financial Disclosure Statement: Stacie Ray is employed by the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. Mariela Grijalva receives financial and tuition support to serve in her role as the GA for the Nebraska Hearing Aid Banks.

Speaker Non-Financial Disclosure Statement: Stacie Ray and Mariela Grijalva have no nonfinancial relationships to disclose.

Samantha Steier, MS, CCC-SLP
Natalie Mason, MS, CCC-SLP

Navigating Hearing Loss and Multilingualism: Emotional and Lived Experiences of Spanish-Speaking Mothers

Most Spanish-speaking families of children who are deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) report receiving little to no guidance on multilingual development from healthcare providers, yet we know little about how this gap is experienced or how it influences family decision-making. Using a phenomenological approach, in this presentation we center the lived experiences of Spanish-speaking mothers of children who are DHH and use cochlear implants or hearing aids. We present themes from semi-structured interviews, including emotional responses to diagnosis and navigating healthcare systems, experiences of support for Spanish and English, and barriers to supporting both languages. We then describe community-engaged practices that support Spanish-speaking families in research. We conclude with clinical implications for speech-language pathologists and audiologists, including practical questions to better understand family language goals, and share accessible Spanish-language resources.

Learning Objectives:

- Define a phenomenological approach and contrast it with other commonly used qualitative methods.
- Identify practical questions to incorporate into intake forms and/or counseling to better understand family language goals and home language routines.
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Samantha Steier is a bilingual speech-language pathologist (English/Spanish) at Boys Town National Research Hospital, where she partners with various labs investigating language development among children with communication disorders and hearing loss, provides standardized test measures equitably to research participants, administers community screenings, and establishes connections within the community to build relationships. She received a bachelor's degree in Speech and Hearing Science as well as Spanish from the University of Iowa. Within a specialty track emphasizing bilingualism, Samantha completed her master's degree in Speech-Language Pathology at Texas Christian University. Her previous clinical focus included working with culturally and linguistically diverse children in both the public schools and outpatient hospital clinic settings in Texas.

Natalie Mason, MS, CCC-SLP is a bilingual (Spanish/English) research speech-language pathologist at Boys Town National Research Hospital. She received her B.S. and M.S. in Speech-Language Pathology at the University of Tulsa. She holds a Graduate Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages and is currently working toward a Graduate Certificate in Spanish. Natalie's previous clinical experience includes work with culturally and linguistically diverse children and adults in a variety of settings, including schools, home-based services, and tele-therapy, both in the United States and abroad in Guatemala.

Not-Presenting: Kathryn Wiseman, AuD, PhD, CCC-A; Tina Cowan, PhD, CCC-SLP

Speaker Financial Disclosure Statement: Samantha Steier is employed by Boys Town National Research Hospital. She has no other relevant financial relationships to disclose.

Natalie Mason is employed by Boys Town National Research Hospital. She has no other relevant financial relationships to disclose.

Speaker Non-Financial Disclosure Statement: Samantha Steier and Natalie Mason has no non-financial relationships to disclose.

PANEL SESSION:

Amanda Aksamit, MS, CCC-SLP

Patty Daberkow, MS, CCC-SLP/AAC

Meghan Green, MS CCC-SLP

Haley Hamze, MA, CCC-SLP

Rebecca Topp, MA, ATP

Kim Bowen, ATP

Building AAC Systems of Support: Implementation Models Across Different Educational Settings

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) implementation looks different across early intervention, preschool, school-age, and transition-aged programs, yet all teams face a common challenge: turning AAC plans into consistent, meaningful practice. This panel presentation brings together speech-language pathologists, educators, assistive technology specialists, and members of the Assistive Technology Partnership Education Program to explore a range of service delivery and implementation models used in schools across Nebraska. Panelists will share real-world examples, lessons learned, and practical strategies for building team capacity, supporting communication across environments, and improving follow-through for AAC users. Participants will leave with ideas for strengthening collaboration, selecting implementation supports, and adapting AAC systems to meet the needs of students across ages and settings.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify factors that support or hinder successful AAC implementation within school-based and interdisciplinary teams.
- Compare strategies for collaboration among SLPs, teachers, assistive technology specialists, and other team members to support AAC use across environments.
- Apply practical ideas for building staff, family, and student capacity to increase consistent AAC use in daily routines and instructional activities.

Amanda Aksamit, MS, CCC-SLP, is a speech-language pathologist and assistive technology specialist for Millard Public Schools. She graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 2009 and has since focused her career on improving outcomes for students birth-21. She is passionate about AAC, literacy, and social communication.

Sarah Billingsley has worked as a speech-language pathologist for more than 26 years. She earned both her undergraduate and master's degrees from the University of Wyoming. She began her career as a pediatric medical SLP at Connecticut Children's Medical Center, the state's only freestanding children's hospital, where she practiced for six years. She then opened a private practice in West Hartford, Connecticut, spending three years building a successful practice with a diverse caseload and growing staff. In 2005, Sarah transitioned to public schools and quickly developed a passion for AAC and assistive technology, which has remained her specialty ever since. After returning home to Gering, Nebraska, in 2020, she has participated in and coached the AT Cadre, and presented on AT locally, regionally, statewide, and with Brian Wojcik for NASES. Supporting students through AT

is both a joy and a privilege.

Patty Daberkow graduated from UNL with a Master's in Speech Language Pathology and have worked 32 years at Lincoln Public Schools. Her titles include Early Childhood SLP, K-12 SLP, Autism Cadre, Support Team Leader, AT/AAC SLP Team Leader. She has experience working with students at all levels, helping them succeed with learning and communicating in all environments while collaborating and building capacity with Special Education teams across LPS school buildings and families.

Meghan Green completed her undergraduate degree at Rockhurst University, Bachelor's in Science in Communication Sciences and Disorders in 2009. Master's of Science degree in Speech Pathology from Western Kentucky University in 2012. She worked in educational settings ranging from early intervention to high school for 13 years, spending the majority of that time in early education.

Haley Hamze is a school-based speech-language pathologist who works with students from kindergarten through 21 with severe autism and complex communication needs. Much of her work focuses on AAC implementation and helping students communicate more effectively across settings and partners. She is excited to share some ideas and real-world strategies from my experience in the schools.

Rebecca Topp is a RESNA-certified Assistive Technology Professional and the Digital Integration Facilitator for Norfolk Public Schools. With nearly 20 years of experience—including over a decade as a LIFE program Special Education Teacher—she specializes in assistive technology with a concentration in AAC. Since 2020, she has focused on managing district technology and leading professional development to create accessible, tech-forward learning environments. A dual-degree graduate in Special Education, Rebecca holds a B.S. from Wayne State College and an M.Ed. as an Assistive Technology Specialist from UNK. In addition to her ATP credential, she is a Level 2 Google Certified Teacher and holds a Nebraska Teaching Certificate. Rebecca remains dedicated to empowering students and educators through innovative, individualized digital solutions.

Kim Bowen is a graduate of Nebraska Wesleyan University with a background in juvenile justice and early childhood services. She served as an Early Childhood Services Coordinator with Lincoln Public Schools, collaborating with IFSP teams and families to connect young children with meaningful services and supports, including communication and participation needs. Kim has been an Assistive Technology Specialist with the ATP Education Program for over six years, working alongside educators, speech-language pathologists, and IEP team members across Nebraska to identify and implement assistive technology solutions that support communication, access, participation, and independence. She provides statewide training, consultation, and coaching to help teams confidently integrate AT into everyday learning and communication.

Not Presenting: Sarah Billingsley, MS, CCC-SLP

Speaker Financial Disclosure Statement: Amanda Aksamit is employed full time at Millard Public Schools and receives a salary for her role as an assistive technology specialist. Sarah Billingsley is employed full time at Scottsbluff Public Schools as a Speech Language Pathologist and Assistive

Technology Specialist.

Patty Daberkow is employed full time by Lincoln Public Schools.

Meghan Green works full time for Bennington Public Schools as a Speech Language Pathologist.

Haley Hamze is employed by Educational Service Unit 3 as a Speech Language Pathologist.

Rebecca Topp is employed by Norfolk Public Schools.

Brian Wojcik works full-time for the Assistive Technology Partnership in Nebraska Department of Education.

Speaker Non-Financial Disclosure Statement: Amanda Aksamit is a member of ASHA. Sarah Billingsley, Patty Daberkow, Meghan Green, Haley Hamze, and Rebecca Topp have no non-financial relationships to disclose. Brian Wojcik is a member of the Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology (QIAT) Leadership Team, State Leaders of Assistive Technology in Education (SLATE) and CEC (ISET and CASE).

Daniel Bombeck, MS, CCC-SLP

Joe Haney, MS, CCC-SLP

It's Not Just Apples to Apples: Understanding the Job Hunt

Comparing salary between job offers is easy, but how do benefits figure into the process? It's not all apple to apples! We will explore what a school salary schedule means and sort through the various benefits an employer is offering.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the basics of salary schedules typically found in public schools
- Read a benefits package and understand how those figure into overall compensation
- Be familiar with the Nebraska Public Education Retirement System (NPERS) and what it means to be part of that system
- Be familiar with questions they may want to ask during the interview process related to salary, benefits, and quality of life while on the job

Daniel Bombeck is the Director of Student Services at Bennington Public Schools, with a background as a Speech-Language Pathologist. He holds his Masters of Science in Speech-Language Pathology from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Joe Haney is the Director of Special Services at ESU 9. He is a Speech Language Pathology graduate from the University of Wyoming. Joe has a background in Speech-Language Pathology and has worked in Level 3 Behavior facilities.

Speaker Financial Disclosure Statement: Daniel Bombeck is employed by Bennington Public Schools.

Joe Haney is employed by ESU 9.

Speaker Non-Financial Disclosure Statement: Daniel Bombeck and Joe Haney have no nonfinancial relationships to disclose.

Treva Graves, MA, CCC-SLP

We've Been Doing it Backwards - It Starts With Us -- Why the Most Powerful Tool in any Therapy Room is a Confident, Regulated Adult

We ask SLPs, OTs, PTs, educators, and school leaders to regulate students, build communication skills, develop resilience, and lead through complexity every single day — yet few have ever been taught to do that work in themselves first. Traditional professional development has focused exclusively outward — on strategies, interventions, behavior plans, and curriculum — without ever addressing the identity, regulation, communication, and confidence of the professionals delivering them.

We have been doing this work backwards.

This transformational keynote session introduces The Unconventional Team Framework — a confidence-first professional development approach built on four pillars that presenter Treva Graves developed over thirty years of school-based practice, one burnout, and one question that changed everything — what if we started with the adult in the room first? Grounded in neuroscience, personal narrative, and immediately practical tools, this session helps SLPs and school-based professionals understand why the regulatory state of the adult in the room directly shapes student outcomes, team culture, and the quality of every IEP meeting, therapy session, and difficult conversation that follows. Participants will leave with the Quick Reset Protocol — a three-step regulation tool for high-pressure moments; the C.A.L.M. Framework — a four-step leadership reset for IEP meetings, escalating behavior, and difficult conversations; and a personal action plan.

Learning Objectives:

- Describe the neurological relationship between adult nervous system regulation and its direct impact on student outcomes, team communication, and professional effectiveness in school-based settings.
- Identify at least three personal patterns of dysregulation, self-doubt, or identity confusion that influence their effectiveness in therapy sessions, IEP meetings, and team collaboration.
- Apply the four pillars of The Unconventional Team Framework — Identity, Regulation, Communication, and Confidence — to their specific professional role and daily school-based practice.
- Demonstrate at least two immediately usable regulation and leadership strategies — including the Quick Reset Protocol and the C.A.L.M. Framework — in high-pressure professional moments such as escalating student behavior, difficult parent conversations, and tense team or IEP meetings.
- Construct a personal action plan identifying one specific commitment to implement the work before the work in their professional practice beginning the day after the session.

Treva Graves, MA, CCC-SLP is a keynote speaker, author, and founder of The Unconventional SLP, a professional development company that helps educators and clinicians build confidence through her Identity, Regulation, Communication, and Confidence Framework. With 25 years of school-based experience, she speaks nationally, partners with universities, and leads professional development across the country. Treva is the co-author of the #1 international bestseller *Success Without Burnout* and author of *Self-Doubt Detox*. She currently serves as an early childhood special education SLP at Northwest AEA in Iowa.

Speaker Financial Disclosure Statement: Treva Graves, MA, CCC-SLP, is the founder and owner of The Unconventional SLP, receives compensation for speaking engagements (including this presentation), and receives royalties from the sale of *The Unconventional Team Framework & Workbook*, *Self-Doubt Detox*, and *Success Without Burnout*, which may be referenced during this presentation.

Speaker Non-Financial Disclosure Statement: Treva Graves, MA, CCC-SLP, has no relevant nonfinancial relationships to disclose.

Justin Kueser, PhD, CCC-SLP

Verb learning in developmental language disorder

Two major challenges for children with developmental language disorder (DLD) are sentence comprehension and depth/breadth of verb vocabulary. These challenges are connected: verbs are the nexus of the sentence, linking agents (actors) and patients (undergoers), as in “The baby [agent] wears a bib [patient]”.

Verb knowledge is an important intervention target in DLD but two gaps remain. First, verb learning in DLD is under-researched – in 2019, 77% of extant word-learning studies taught only nouns – and extant work has never targeted the patients associated with verbs, which are highly relevant to sentence comprehension. Second, no work has examined how verb learning relates to sentence comprehension in DLD, despite being an important outcome of verb learning. In this presentation, we will describe what we currently know about verb learning in DLD followed by two recent studies examining how verb knowledge and learning impact sentence comprehension in DLD. The first study, recently published in *JSLHR* (Kueser et al., 2026), demonstrates that knowledge about the patients associated verbs impacts sentence comprehension in DLD. Children with DLD know less about which patients are associated with verbs (e.g., babies wear bibs more than necklaces), slowing comprehension of sentences with those same verbs (e.g., “The baby is wearing a bib”). The second study examines how to teach verb-patient associates and measures its impact on sentence comprehension.

Learning Objectives:

- Describe the challenges involved in verb learning for children with and without developmental language disorder
- Summarize how verb knowledge and learning impact sentence comprehension in developmental language disorder

Justin Kueser is a research scientist at Boys Town National Research Hospital studying child language development, heading the Emerging Language Knowledge (ELK) Lab. I am also a certified speech-language pathologist. My research focuses on understanding the language development of children with early language delay and disorders. I primarily work with toddlers with early language delay (often called “late talkers”) and older children aged 3-6 years with developmental language disorder (DLD), a life-long condition that occurs in roughly 7-9% of the population characterized by difficulties in language learning and processing. My work focuses on understanding how children with language delays and disorders represent and process language with the ultimate goal of designing clinical interventions to support these children’s language development.

Not Presenting: Emma Kate Thome, PhD, CCC-SLP
Zhang Jacqueline
Katherine Gordon, PhD
Cowdrey Kaylee

Speaker Financial Disclosure Statement: Justin Kueser is employed by Boys Town National Research Hospital.

Speaker Non-Financial Disclosure Statement: Justin Kueser has non nonfinancial relationships to disclose.

Jenilee Woltman, MS Ed, CCC-SLP

From Appointment to Everyday: Closing the Loop Between Clinical Care and Daily Life for Neurodivergent Children

For neurodivergent children, progress happens not just in the therapy room, it happens at the breakfast table, in the hallway between classes, and during the transition from school to home. Yet the current model of behavioral and communication support was built around the appointment, leaving families, teachers, and providers working from different playbooks with no shared system for tracking what is actually happening between sessions.

This session explores the clinical and systemic gap between scheduled care and daily life for children with ADHD, autism spectrum disorder, and related developmental differences. Drawing on clinical experience across pediatric and multi-setting care environments, the presenter will examine how fragmented communication between parents, educators, and providers contributes to slower progress, caregiver burnout, and inefficient use of limited appointment time. Attendees will explore a closed-loop care framework that transforms provider sessions by equipping clinicians with real-world behavioral data before they walk into the room — shifting appointment time from status updates to targeted treatment. Practical strategies for implementing cross-setting communication and data sharing within existing caseload structures will be discussed, with attention to the unique challenges facing families in rural and underserved communities who face waitlists or eligibility barriers to services.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify at least three ways fragmented communication between parents, educators, and clinical providers impacts treatment efficiency and child progress outcomes for neurodivergent children.
- Describe the closed-loop care framework and explain how real-world behavioral data collected between appointments can be used to increase the clinical effectiveness of SLP and related therapy sessions.
- Apply at least two strategies for improving cross-setting communication with families and educators within their current caseload structure, including adaptations for rural and underserved populations with limited access to services.

Jenilee Woltman, MS Ed, CCC-SLP is a licensed Speech-Language Pathologist and founder and CEO of Mission Accomplished, an AI-powered behavioral support platform for neurodivergent children. She earned her MS Ed in Speech-Language Pathology from the University of Nebraska at Kearney in 2017 and her BS in Animal Science from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. With nearly a decade of clinical experience spanning pediatric care and skilled nursing facilities, Jenilee has seen firsthand what happens when care teams aren't connected. As the mother of a neurodivergent daughter, she has lived the frustration families face navigating a fragmented support system turning that personal experience into Mission Accomplished's closed-loop behavioral support platform, designed to bridge the gap between clinical

appointments and everyday life for families on waitlists or told their child doesn't qualify for services. Mission Accomplished is affiliated with Techstars, Innosphere, and NSF I-Corps.

Speaker Financial Disclosure Statement: Jenilee is the owner and founder of Sand Canyon Therapy, LLC & Mission Accomplished, LLC

Speaker Non-Financial Disclosure Statement: Jenilee Woltman has no non-financial relationships to disclose.

Zoey Bertsch, MA, CCC-SLP
Kelsey Wagner, MS, CCC-SLP

Reclaiming Identity and Intimacy: The Role of the Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) in Sexual Health After Neurologic Injury

Sexual health is a key component of quality of life, yet it remains under-addressed in rehabilitation for young adults with neurologic injury, including spinal cord injury, traumatic brain injury, and stroke. This session provides a practical, SLP-focused overview of how cognitive-communication, physical, and emotional changes impact intimacy, identity, and participation. Presenters will address common barriers and offer strategies to integrate sexual health into SLP workflows, documentation, and interdisciplinary care. Attendees will gain conversational frameworks and resources to support confident, patient-centered discussions and promote holistic neurorehabilitation.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify physical, cognitive, and emotional impacts of SCI, TBI, and stroke on sexual functioning and intimacy and describe their impact on communication, participation, and quality of life within the scope of SLP practice.
- Discuss barriers to sexual health integration in rehab and propose solutions for workflows and documentation.
- Demonstrate conversational frameworks for initiating sexual health discussions and identify accessible, credible resources for education.

Zoey Bertsch, MA, CCC-SLP, is an inpatient speech-language pathologist at Quality Living Inc. (QLI), a post-acute residential rehabilitation program serving individuals with traumatic brain injury, stroke, and spinal cord injury. Zoey's clinical practice centers on functional, interdisciplinary rehabilitation for young adults, with a focus on cognitive-communication recovery, patient and caregiver education, and reintegration into meaningful life roles. She is passionate about incorporating holistic, patient-centered approaches within medical settings, including advocating for the integration of sexual health, identity, and relationship education as essential components of neurorehabilitation.

Kelsey Wagner, MS, CCC-SLP, is a speech-language pathologist specializing in neurological rehabilitation at QLI – Kintinu Telerehab in Omaha, Nebraska. She provides person-centered, evidence-based therapy for individuals with traumatic brain injury, stroke, and spinal cord injury, with a focus on functional communication, cognition, and vocational reintegration. Kelsey emphasizes compensatory strategies, technology integration, and self-management to support independence and confidence. She has presented at the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA) Convention on topics including neurogenic stuttering and assistive technology for post-aphasia writing and is passionate about expanding access to high-quality rehabilitation through telepractice.

Speaker Financial Disclosure Statement: Zoey Bertsch and Kelsey Wagner are employees of and receive salaries from Quality Living Inc., in Omaha, NE.

Speaker Non-Financial Disclosure Statement: Zoey Bertsch and Kelsey Wagner have no nonfinancial conflicts of interest to disclose..

Kellie Brink, MS, CCC-SLP

Compliance or Choice? Rethinking Diet Modification and Informed Consent

Recommending a modified diet, including thickened liquids or altered food textures, is considered a healthcare treatment and requires informed consent. General strategies, such as adding gravy to dry foods or encouraging upright posture during meals, do not constitute treatment. Speech-language pathologists (SLPs) must understand both the evidence supporting diet modifications and the ethical and legal responsibilities related to consent.

Patients should be active participants in decisions regarding diet modification. Although shared decision making (SDM) is frequently cited in the literature, it is often misapplied. Clinicians must examine who is involved in decision making and avoid assumptions of patient compliance. Language such as “non-compliance” may negatively influence interdisciplinary perceptions, and patients should not be denied therapy solely for declining a recommended diet.

Evidence-based practice integrates clinical expertise, current research, and patient values and circumstances. Clinicians should explore patient preferences and provide balanced information regarding potential benefits, risks, quality-of-life considerations, and limitations of existing evidence. Valid consent must be given freely and without coercion, with clear understanding of the right to refuse treatment. When patients lack decision-making capacity, substitute decision makers must be provided accurate and balanced information.

Learning Objectives:

- Describe the informed consent process as it applies to clinical decision-making for modified diets.
- Examine current speech-language pathology practices for recommending modified diets.
- Analyze the current evidence regarding the benefits, limitations, and potential risks of modified diets to support balanced, evidence-based recommendations.
- Summarize the potential benefits and harms associated with modified diet recommendations.
- Apply evidence-based principles to clinical decision-making through analysis of case studies.

Kellie is a Speech-Language Pathologist with 14 years of medical experience specializing in dysphagia. I earned my Master's degree from the University of Nebraska at Omaha in 2012, hold ASHA CCCs, and am a 2022–2023 ACE Award recipient with advanced training in endoscopy, head and neck cancer, and upper airway disorders. I work as an acute care SLP at Nebraska Methodist Hospital and am the owner/endoscopist of Heartland Swallow Studies, a mobile FEES service providing assessments and education to regional facilities. I regularly present on dysphagia to healthcare professionals, students, and community groups.

Speaker Financial Disclosure Statement: Kellie Brink is Employed at Nebraska Methodist Hospital and Owner/Operator Heartland Swallow Studies.

Speaker Non-Financial Disclosure Statement: Kellie Brink serves on NSLHA education committee.

Kayla Korth, MA, CCC-SLP

Cognitive Therapy for Aging Adults

This presentation will focus on working with aging adults to identify and treat those that need mental stimulation to boost overall performance in the home and community.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify individuals who are appropriate candidates for cognitive therapy.
- Describe evidence-based cognitive intervention strategies that can be implemented in the home and community settings.
- Explain the roles of interdisciplinary team members and describe collaborative approaches to developing comprehensive, patient-centered plans of care.

Kayla Korth has a Masters Degree in Speech-Language Pathology. She earned my CCC and have also earned to ACE Awards from ASHA and currently works in the medical field with inpatients, outpatients, home health, and in the nursing homes. Korth has created workflows for admission order sets to include evaluation and treatment from the SLP for anyone with a fall with head injury, pneumonia, and difficulty swallowing. She has advocated to staff to include SLP in inpatient rounding that happens MTTHF and rehab meetings on Wednesdays weekly. SLP has become an integral part of patient care in our rural critical access hospital. We work on cognition to prevent falls when we notice a patient is falling more often in the home and staff know to include and ask physicians for orders for SLP to eval and treat cognition when they see certain criteria.

Speaker Financial Disclosure Statement: Kayla Korth is employed by Providence Medical Center, Wayne NE.

Speaker Non-Financial Disclosure Statement: Kayla Korth has no nonfinancial relationships to disclose.

Candice Mullendore, MS, OTR/L Mary Walsh-Sterup, OTR/L, CHT Jessica Thoene, MS Ed, CCC-SLP

The new SLP CPT Codes. What you need to know before January 1, 2027

Speech language pathologists in every setting are facing the biggest coding change in decades. The single, untimed CPT code, 92507, is being replaced by 10 new CPT codes that are disorder specific and time based. In this 30 minute session, we will walk through what is confirmed, what is pending and the steps every SLP should be taking now.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify the differences between the current 92507 CPT code and the 10 new disorder specific, time based CPT codes
- Name 2 steps to prepare clinical documentation and scheduled for the January 1, 2027 transition

Candice Mullendore is the owner of Pediatric Therapy Center and co-founder of THE Therapy Practice Advisory group which offers paid continuing education, including content related to the topics discussed in this presentation.

Mary brings more than 35 years of experience in clinical

practice, healthcare management, policy development, and regulatory compliance as an occupational therapist, certified hand therapist, and compliance leader. As former co-owner of a large multidisciplinary therapy practice spanning 17 outpatient locations, hospital partnerships, and 68+ school districts in Nebraska, she led delivery of PT, OT, and speech services across diverse care settings. Mary is widely recognized for her expertise in healthcare compliance, billing, and coding, having helped develop Powerhouse Billing, a therapy-specialty billing company where she continues to advise. She was appointed to the Health Care Professionals Advisory Committee (HCPAC) and recently elected Alternate Co-Chair of the HCPAC to the RUC, bringing deep advisory-level knowledge of CPT coding structures and the RUC valuation process. Mary has also served as Board Chair of the Nebraska Board of Occupational Therapy.

Jessica Thoene, M.S.Ed., CCC-SLP, is a speech-language pathologist with more than 20 years of experience across private practice, long-term care, home health, acute care, and cash-pay services. She previously owned a multidisciplinary private practice for 20 years providing PT, OT, and speech-language services, developing deep expertise in business operations, healthcare policy, and insurance reimbursement. A dedicated advocate for the SLP profession, Jessica has presented nationally at the APTA National Conference and frequently at NSLHA's Annual Convention on insurance, reimbursement, and healthcare policy. She has served on the NSLHA Board of Directors and its Insurance Reimbursement Committee, and represented Nebraska on ASHA's STAR and SEAL committees.

Jessica helped pass approximately four bills advancing the profession. She currently serves on the Nebraska Total Care Provider Advisory Committee, working with providers and payer to strengthen access to care.

Speaker Financial Disclosure Statement: Candice Mullendore is the owner of Pediatric Therapy Center and co-founder of THE Therapy Practice Advisory group which offers paid continuing education, including content related to the topics discussed in this presentation.

Mary Walsh Sterup is Senior Advisor to THE Therapy Practice Advisory Group (TPAG), which offers paid continuing education, including content related to the topics discussed in this presentation. She also serves as an advisor to Powerhouse Billing, a therapy-specialty billing company. Jessica Thoene is owner of Alpha Rehabilitation in Kearney, NE.

Speaker Non-Financial Disclosure Statement: Candice Mullendore serves as Vice President of Policy and Advocacy for the Nebraska Occupational Therapy Association and as the alternate advisor to AOTA's HCPAC committee for the Relative Value Update Committee and the American Medical Association.

Mary Walsh Sterup serves as Alternate Co-Chair of the Health Care Professionals Advisory Committee (HCPAC) to the RUC, and has served as Board Chair of the Nebraska Board of Occupational Therapy and of Great Plains Safety and Wellness.

Jessica Thoene serves on the Nebraska Speech-Language-Hearing Association (NSLHA) Board of Directors and Insurance Reimbursement Committee, represents Nebraska on ASHA's STAR and SEAL committees, and serves on the Nebraska Total Care Provider Advisory Committee.

Lindsay Larkin, MS, CCC-SLP
Natalie Douglas, PhD

Pitch Perfect: The SLP's Guide to Getting Corporate Greenlights for Clinical Programming

Speech-language pathologists are master communicators when it comes to clinical diagnostics and therapeutic interventions. However, when it comes to navigating corporate structures in order to request a budget for a new resource, to begin a new program, or advocating for operational changes, many SLPs experience a profound "language barrier." Traditional graduate programs rigorously prepare us for the clinic, but often exclude the business acumen and financial literacy required to influence healthcare executives or school administrators.

This session bridges the gap between clinical excellence and corporate strategy. Grounded in recent implementation science and workforce research, this course addresses the systemic anxieties and knowledge gaps that hold SLPs back from pitching innovative ideas to help remain on the forefront of evidence-based practice. Attendees will learn how to dismantle implementation anxiety, translate clinical outcomes into Return on Investment (ROI) metrics, and present data-backed proposals that command administrative buy-in. Stop letting great clinical initiatives die in the suggestion box; learn how to pitch like a business partner and get your programs greenlit.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify common barriers to leadership engagement and adoption of clinical initiatives.
- Convert clinical outcomes into key financial and operational metrics (e.g., return on investment [ROI]) to support program proposals.
- Outline the key components of a persuasive, evidence-based proposal that aligns clinical initiatives with organizational priorities.

Lindsay Larkin, MS, CCC-SLP, is a Learning Program Manager at Ivy Rehab with a background in speech-language pathology from Loyola University Maryland. In her current role, she leads the development and implementation of enterprise-wide onboarding programs, supporting clinicians and teams across the organization.

Natalie F. Douglas, PhD, CCC-SLP, is the Evidence & Practice Strategist and a writer for the Adults section at The Informed SLP, where she translates research into practical tools for clinicians. Her work focuses on improving communication access for adults with dementia, aphasia, and other acquired communication disabilities. She is also an Associate Professor of Communicative Disorders at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and practices PRN in skilled-nursing settings.

Speaker Financial Disclosure Statement: Lindsay Larkin is an employee of Ivy Rehab. Natalie Douglas is employed by The Informed SLP and the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

Speaker Non-Financial Disclosure Statement: Lindsay Larkin and Natalie Douglas have no nonfinancial relationships to disclose.

Riley Love, CCC-SLP

Beyond Picky Eating: Identifying and Treating Pediatric Feeding Disorders in Everyday Practice

Feeding concerns are commonly reported in pediatric practice, yet clinicians often struggle to differentiate between typical picky eating and pediatric feeding disorders requiring intervention. This uncertainty can lead to delayed referrals, inconsistent treatment approaches, and increased caregiver stress. This session will provide a practical, evidence-informed framework for identifying and treating pediatric feeding disorders across clinical settings. Participants will review key red flags that distinguish developmentally appropriate feeding behaviors from clinically significant feeding challenges. The presentation will also introduce a step-by-step approach to evaluation and intervention, incorporating oral-motor, sensory, and behavioral considerations. Emphasis will be placed on real-world application, including how to make confident clinical decisions, prioritize treatment targets, and implement effective strategies within time and resource constraints. Through case-based learning, attendees will leave with increased confidence in recognizing pediatric feeding disorders and initiating appropriate, functional interventions in everyday practice.

Learning Objectives:

- Differentiate between typical picky eating and pediatric feeding disorders using at least three clinical indicators.
- Identify key red flags across medical, oral-motor, sensory, and behavioral domains that warrant further assessment or intervention.
- Apply a structured framework for evaluating pediatric feeding concerns in clinical practice.
- Select appropriate, functional intervention strategies based on individual child presentation and needs.

Riley Love is a speech-language pathologist specializing in infant and pediatric feeding and swallowing disorders. She received her masters degree in Speech-Language Pathology from the University of Nebraska Lincoln. She has worked in both inpatient acute care as well as the outpatient setting. Currently she supports patients and families through Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital's outpatient pediatric program.

Speaker Financial Disclosure Statement: Riley Love is employed by Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital.

Speaker Non-Financial Disclosure Statement: Riley Love has no nonfinancial relationships to disclose.

Sarah Al-Salim, AuD, CCC-A

Otoacoustic Emissions as Predictors of Middle-Ear and Hearing Status

This work examines the clinical utility of distortion product otoacoustic emissions (DPOAEs) in understanding middle-ear and hearing status in children with otitis media with effusion (OME). Although DPOAEs are not a measure of hearing, they have the potential to serve as a screening tool that could gauge whether hearing status is impacted by an episode of OME, particularly when behavioral audiometric findings are unattainable. A retrospective analysis of DPOAE data, wideband tympanometry, and behavioral audiometric findings collected as part of two longitudinal studies conducted by our laboratory was completed. Both experiments involved audiological monitoring at multiple time points of 187 children (n = 374 ears) between 6 months and 12 years of age, with OME or healthy, normal-hearing ears. Preliminary analyses indicate a systematic reduction in DPOAE amplitude and the number of DPOAEs present as middle ear status deteriorates and effusion volume increases. Ears with middle-ear dysfunction based on tympanometry and with a majority of OAEs present in the 2000-8000 Hz range are expected to have hearing generally unaffected by the middle ear disorder. Conversely, ears with less than 50% of OAEs present can be expected to have an effusion significant enough to affect hearing to a mild or moderate degree. In the absence of behavioral audiometric findings, tympanometry and DPOAEs can be used to screen children with suspected middle-ear dysfunction for associated hearing loss. This information may be used to triage medical management of middle-ear dysfunction in cases where hearing loss is present.

Learning Objectives:

- Summarize how DPOAE amplitude is affected by differences in middle-ear function.
- Differentiate between middle-ear status groups based on the percentage of present DPOAEs.
- Utilize DPOAEs as a screening tool for hearing loss secondary to middle-ear dysfunction.

Sarah Al-Salim, Au.D., CCC-A is a Senior Research Audiologist at Boys Town National Research Hospital (BTNRH) where she manages the Translational Auditory Physiology and Perception Lab (P.I. Gabrielle Merchant, Au.D., Ph.D., CCC-A). She completed her Au.D. at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln while working as a research assistant at BTNRH. She completed her clinical externship in Chicago, IL and worked as a clinical audiologist in Illinois prior to returning to BTNRH. Her primary research interest lies in the development of clinical diagnostic and assessment tools and intervention strategies that could lead to improved communication outcomes in children with hearing loss.

Speaker Financial Disclosure Statement: Sarah Al-Salim is a salaried employee of Boys Town National Research Hospital. Funding for this study comes from the National Institutes of Health.

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Genesis Bautista-Espinosa

The impact of diversity in linguistic experience on school-age children's speech recognition

Every day, children are exposed to different voices, pronunciations, and speech patterns, including second language (L2) accents. Despite this, not much is known about how children use these experiences to understand novel talkers with unfamiliar speech patterns. The focus of this study is to better understand how children's prior linguistic experiences help them understand novel talkers who produce unfamiliar L2-accented speech. Participants from two language groups were recruited for this study: monolingual children and bilingual children. The children were presented with lexically easy (few similar-sounding alternatives) and lexically hard (many similar-sounding alternatives) English words from the Lexical Neighborhood Test (Lexical Neighborhood Test). These English words were recorded by a talker whose first language was Korean. The words were presented in quiet under headphones in a sound booth. The children repeated the words they heard, and their phoneme-level accuracy was scored online. After completing this word recognition task, the children completed English language tests that assessed their phonological awareness, phonological short-term memory, and receptive vocabulary knowledge. Additionally, working memory was assessed. Caregivers reported information about the participants' common communication partners to characterize the diversity in linguistic input for each child. We will analyze these data to evaluate whether diversity in linguistic experience influences the cognitive demands and accuracy of recognizing speech produced by a talker with an unfamiliar L2 accent. Results will be presented and discussed.

Learning Objectives:

- Describe how children perceive speech produced by novel talkers with unfamiliar speech patterns.
- Describe the role working memory plays in supporting recognition of speech produced by novel talkers.
- Describe how the social network questionnaire assessed the diversity in linguistic input for each participant.
- Explain how past experiences with different speech patterns impact unfamiliar speech pattern recognition.

Genesis Bautista-Espinosa is a bilingual research assistant (English/Spanish) at Boys Town National Research Hospital. She works in the Language Experience and Speech Perception (LEAP) Laboratory directed by Dr. Tiana Cowan, investigating speech perception in individuals who are linguistically and culturally diverse. Genesis supports data collection, assessment scoring and interpretation, and recruitment for the laboratory. She received a bachelor's degree in Psychology and Biology from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Speaker Financial Disclosure Statement: Genesis is employed by Boys Town National Research Hospital.

Speaker Non-Financial Disclosure Statement: Genesis has no financial relationships to disclose.

Cheng-Han Chou, BS
Marc Brennan, BS, MS, PhD

Exploring the impact of level, signal frequency, age, and hearing status on gaussian noise disruption with a psychoacoustic forward masking paradigm

Hearing in noisy environments can be challenging for individuals with normal hearing but is exacerbated for individuals with hearing loss. There are several mechanisms that can influence hearing in noise performance, including stimulus envelope perception, the noise maskers' properties relative to the target sound, and neural adaptation, such as from the medial olivocochlear (MOC) efferent system. This study aimed to investigate how masker levels, signal frequencies, masker-signal delay, and GND influence envelope perception under forward-masking conditions, and how these effects vary as a function of age and hearing status. Fifty-three participants, categorized by age and hearing status, completed the study tasks.

Masked thresholds increased with masker level and differed across listener groups, with the highest thresholds observed for older adults with sensorineural hearing loss (OSNHL) and lowest for younger adults with normal hearing (YNH). Masked thresholds decreased as masker-signal delay increased from 25 to 75 ms across groups, consistent with recovery from forward masking. GND was reduced at the longer 75-ms delay and varied across frequencies, masker levels, and listener groups, with older adults with minimal hearing loss (ONH/OMHL) showing relatively greater disruption than OSNHL participants in some conditions. These findings demonstrate that both stimulus characteristics and listener factors contribute to variability in forward-masking performance and envelope perception, providing a foundation for future research on auditory processing in complex listening environments.

Learning Objectives:

- Describe how masker level and signal frequency influence detection thresholds in forward-masking paradigms.
- Interpret how Gaussian noise (GN) disruption varies across listener groups with different hearing status and age-related changes.
- Explain the role of temporal factors, such as masker-signal delay, in shaping forward masking and susceptibility to masking effects.
- Compare differences in masking patterns between younger normal-hearing (YNH), older normal-hearing/minimal hearing loss (ONH/OMHL), and older sensorineural hearing loss (OSNHL) listeners.
- Describe how the findings of this research related to clinical practice.

Cheng-Han Chou (Han) completed his B.S. in Audiology in the Department of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology at Mackay Medical University in Taiwan. Following his fourth-year audiology internship and successful completion of the national Senior Professional and Technical Examinations, he worked as a licensed audiologist in hearing aid dispensing centers, a hospital, and a hard-of-hearing welfare association in Taiwan. He has received a M.S. in Audiology and he is currently pursuing his Doctor of Audiology (Au.D.) degree at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He will begin his fourth-year

externship at an ENT clinic in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Marc Brennan completed his B.S. and M.S. in Communicative Disorders at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He completed his Ph.D. in Speech and Hearing Sciences at the University of Washington-Seattle. He has over 20 years of experience as an Audiologist, having provided services across the lifespan. His research has examined the impact of hearing aids on auditory perception and through that work he has devised novel methods to assess the audibility of speech sounds. He currently investigates the effectiveness of novel hearing aid algorithms at Starkey Hearing Technologies.

Speaker Financial Disclosure Statement: The sponsor of the research is the Hearing Industry Research Consortium. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln receives funding from the sponsor to conduct this study.

Cheng-Han Chou has no other relevant financial relationships to disclose.

Marc Brennan is employed by Starkey Hearing Technologies.

Speaker Non-Financial Disclosure Statement: Cho and Brennan have no financial relationships to disclose.

Kaylee Cowdrey, BA

From Verb Learning to Sentence Production in Children with Developmental Language Disorder

Children with developmental language disorder (DLD) face challenges in the depth and breadth of their verb vocabularies. Because verbs support sentence structure by linking agents and patients (e.g., the dog devours the hamburger), verb knowledge is critical not only for sentence comprehension but also for sentence production. Prior work has shown that verb knowledge supports sentence comprehension in children with DLD. However, a key question remains unanswered: How does verb learning support children's sentence production?

The current project extends a prior study of verb learning and sentence processing in 5- to 8-year-old children with DLD ($n = 15$) and typical development (TD; $n = 14$). In the original study (Kueser et al., in prep.), the children were taught verb-patient associations for eight advanced verbs (e.g., "you can swat moths, ladybugs, and bees"). After the teaching phase, verb knowledge was assessed in a post-test, and comprehension of sentences including the trained verbs was measured via eye-tracking.

The current project analyzes whether the children can apply their newly acquired verb knowledge in a more open-ended context, that is, in a sentence-production task. In this task, the children viewed an illustration depicting one of the target verbs in action, presented alongside two distractor illustrations of nearby agents (i.e., actors) performing either a semantically similar action (e.g., devour – cook) or a semantically dissimilar action (e.g., devour – chase) on different patients (i.e., undergoers). The children were then asked to describe the scene using the target verb (e.g., "Describe this picture using the word swat"). We measured how often the children used the correct verb, described the correct agent, and described the correct patient. We then correlated these measures with post-test learning accuracy and sentence comprehension data to

better understand how expressive verb use relates to other verb-knowledge outcomes.

We hypothesized that children with TD would demonstrate more accurate use of verbs on the sentence production task than children with DLD, and that accuracy would correlate with post-test and sentence comprehension data.

The children with TD scored significantly higher than those with DLD across all sentence production subtypes: verb use, agent fit, and patient fit. Across groups, the proportion of correct verb use was highest, followed by agent fit, then patient fit, suggesting that producing the correct verb was easier than producing a complete, semantically correct sentence. In a supplemental analysis, we found that the children with TD also produced a higher proportion of grammatically correct utterances.

Sentence production accuracy was significantly correlated with post-test verb learning accuracy across all three score subtypes, supporting our hypothesis. This suggests that children who developed stronger knowledge of verbs during the learning task were also better able to use those verbs meaningfully in their own sentences, indicating that teaching verb meanings can support sentence production. However, post-test verb learning accuracy was not significantly related to grammatical accuracy, suggesting that even when children learned and practiced verbs in grammatical contexts, this did not necessarily translate into more accurate grammar in open-ended production.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify challenges in verb learning for children with DLD
- Describe how learning the semantic aspects of verbs can support different aspects of sentence production

Kaylee Cowdrey earned her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in May 2025. During her time at UNL, she gained research experience as a research assistant in Dr. Rebecca Brock's Family Development Lab, where she contributed to projects focused on family processes and child development. She also completed an honors thesis: a systematic review examining the role of physical activity in adolescent resilience. Since July 2025, she has served as a research assistant at Boys Town National Research Hospital in Dr. Justin Kueser's Emerging Language Knowledge Lab. In this role, she supports research examining language development, sentence processing, and learning in children.

Speaker Financial Disclosure Statement: Kaylee Cowdrey is employed as a research assistant by Boys Town National Research Hospital.

Speaker Non-Financial Disclosure Statement: Kaylee Cowdrey has no non-financial relationships to disclose.

Ladan Ghazi Saidi, PhD

Moriah Gilman

Noelle Abel

Kinley Helmer

Preston Ramaekers

Dawson Helmer

Dr. Douglas Schultz

Participant Perspectives on Cognitive Health Interventions

Non-pharmacological interventions may support cognitive health in older adulthood; however, their feasibility depends not only on cognitive outcomes, but also on participant experience, perceived benefit, engagement, and adherence. This study examines participant perceptions of three cognitive health interventions: reading, language learning, and exercise. Adults aged 60–80 were recruited through flyers and social media and completed pre- and post-intervention cognitive assessments with a neuropsychology battery measuring different cognitive domains and global cognitive status. Following baseline assessment, participants completed a four-month intervention involving reading, language learning, or exercise, with a target engagement of at least 60 minutes per day, five days per week. Adherence was monitored throughout the intervention period. A total of 83 participants completed the interventions and provided exit survey data regarding accessibility, perceived usefulness, ease of use, engagement, user control, perceived impact, and overall satisfaction.

Preliminary findings indicated distinct perception profiles across intervention conditions. Reading received the highest ratings for perceived usefulness and ease of use, suggesting that participants viewed it as accessible, low-cost, and easy to integrate into daily routines. However, reading also received the lowest ratings for perceived engagement and impact, suggesting risk for passive participation. Exercise received the highest ratings for perceived engagement and impact, indicating that participants experienced it as active, meaningful, and more directly connected to functional outcomes. However, higher dropout in the exercise condition limited quantitative outcome analysis, highlighting adherence as a key implementation challenge. Language learning received the highest rating for user control, suggesting that participants valued its flexibility and autonomy. Nevertheless, it received the lowest ratings for perceived usefulness and engagement, indicating that autonomy alone may not sustain motivation when benefits are not clearly perceived.

These findings suggest that intervention design for cognitive health should balance usability, perceived benefit, engagement, and sustainability. Reading may require strategies to increase engagement, exercise may require retention support, and language learning may require clearer framing of its cognitive and functional benefits.

Learning Objectives:

- Describe participant perceptions of reading, exercise, and language-learning interventions designed to support cognitive health in older adults.
- Compare perceived usefulness, ease of use, engagement, user control, and perceived impact across the three intervention conditions.
- Identify key feasibility considerations, including usability,

motivation, adherence, and retention, that may influence the sustainability of non-pharmacological cognitive health interventions.

Dr. Ghazi Saidi joined UNK in succession of a fellowship in Neuropsychology of Neurodegenerative Diseases and Neuroimaging at Cleveland Clinic Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health, Las Vegas, NV, and three years of post-doctoral research in Neuropsychology of Language acquisition and Bilingualism at Centre de Recherche Institute Gériatrie de Montréal, Montréal, Québec, Canada. She completed her doctorate program in Biomedical Sciences; Option: Neuropsychology in Faculty of Medicine, University of Montreal, Montreal, QC, Canada. She also has a Master's degree in Translation Studies and a Bachelor's degree in Biology.

Dr. Ghazi Saidi is an expert in neurocognitive processes of language, cognition and aging in bilingual and monolingual populations. She is dedicated to educating and mentoring future Speech-Language Pathologist who are lifelong learners and inclusive to diversity.

Dr. Ghazi Saidi is the director of UNK Language & Cognition lab, where we conduct behavioral and neuroimaging research on Language and cognition in healthy adults and individuals with Aphasia and Dementia. We focus on adult language acquisition and disorders as well as cognitive and neuroscience aspects of language and cognition at aging. We also study the bilingual population with a focus on cognitive advantages of bilingualism as a contributing factor to cognitive reserve and prevention of neurodegenerative diseases. We are also interested in Alternative Therapies including Animal-Assisted Therapy, Music Therapy, and Cognitive Stimulation for prevention & intervention of cognitive decline and promoting healthy aging in rural/urban monolingual/bilingual population, using telepractice, neuroimaging, quantitative and mixed methods, and clinical trials.

<https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ladan-Ghazi-Saidi> Speaker

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Moriah Gilman is Graduate Research Assistant and received scholarship and stipend from University of Nebraska at Kearney.

Noelle Abel and Kinley Helmer received an Undergraduate Research Fellowship at UNK and are employed at UNK Language and Cognition lab funded by NU Collaborative Grant and URF. Noelle Abels and Dawson Helmer also received SSRP stipend.

Presten Ramaekers and Dawson Helmer are employed at UNK Language and Cognition lab funded by NU Collaborative Grant, as Undergraduate Research Assistant and Graduate Research Assistant respectively.

Dr. Schultz is a fulltime employee of University of Nebraska-Lincoln and as a Co-PI received NU Collaborative Grant to fund this project.

Speaker Non-Financial Disclosure Statement: Ladan Ghazi Saidi has no non-financial relationship to disclose.

Moriah Gilman, Noelle Abel, Kinley Helmer, Presten

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Jane Grothaus, PhD, CCC-SLP, MBA
Megan Wells

Parent Attitudes Toward Augmentative & Alternative Communication (AAC) in Children with Speech & Language Disorders

This poster session presents findings from a qualitative study examining parent and caregiver perceptions of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) for children with speech and language disorders. The poster outlines the purpose, methodology, and key results of a 15-question survey distributed over eight weeks to parents of children using AAC. Themes include positive beliefs regarding improved communication and socialization, alongside reported barriers such as device reliability, inconsistent implementation, and limited school-based support. Visual data displays highlight emerging themes and practical implications. The session emphasizes the importance of family-centered, collaborative AAC decision-making and provides recommendations for clinicians and educators to strengthen caregiver training, peer support networks, and interdisciplinary systems to improve long-term communication outcomes.

Learning Objectives:

- Analyze Parent and caregiver perspectives on AAC
- Evaluate systematic and environmental barriers to AAC access
- Develop collaborative AAC support plans

Dr. Grothaus received her Doctorate from Old Dominion University in Special Education with a concentration in Communication Disorders (2018). She received her master's degree in Speech-Language Pathology from the Ohio State University (1999) and holds bachelor's degrees from Butler University (Speech-Language Pathology, 1997; Public and Corporate Communications, 1994). Dr. Grothaus also holds a Master of Business Administration from Case Western Reserve University (2012).

Ms. Wells is an undergraduate student at UNK who has published articles and presented at UNK and ASHA as well as KSSHLA on her research.

Financial Disclosure Statement: Dr. Grothaus is employed at UNK, Ms. Wells is an undergraduate student at UNK.

Speaker Non-Financial Disclosure Statement: Dr. Grothaus and Ms. Wells have no non-financial relationships to disclose.

Paige Miller, MS, CCC-SLP

Reading Motivation in Adolescents with Hearing Loss and Typical Hearing

Prior work has found a link between reading motivation and reading comprehension in typical hearing children; however, there are limited data on reading motivation in adolescents with hearing loss. The current poster sought to address the following questions: 1) Are adolescents' motivation to read influenced by hearing status or socio-economic status? 2) Which aspects of motivation to read predict reading comprehension in adolescents with hearing loss and adolescents with typical hearing? 3) How does reading motivation affect language and reading outcomes in adolescents with hearing loss? We used the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ) to assess reading motivation in 170 adolescents with hearing loss and 87 adolescents with typical hearing, ranging in age from 12-19. Results of this study will provide additional insight into factors driving individual differences in reading comprehension for adolescents who are deaf or hard of hearing and their same-age hearing peers.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify components of reading motivation
- Compare levels of reading motivation in adolescents with hearing loss relative to hearing peers
- Analyze the associations between reading motivation and reading and language outcomes

Paige Miller is a research Speech-Language Pathologist in the Audibility, Cognition, and Perception Lab at Boys Town National Research Hospital. She supports research on language outcomes for children with hearing loss through participant recruitment and data collection, with interests in pediatric language development and evidence-based practice.

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Speaker Non-Financial Disclosure Statement: Paige Miller has no non-financial relationships to disclose.

Lauren Paben

From School Screening to Hearing Healthcare: Developing Resources for Parents and Providers to Reduce Loss to Follow-up

This project is a capstone completed as part of the Doctor of Audiology (AuD) degree. Previous unpublished capstone research found that loss to follow-up rates across multiple states averaged 26%, and a school district in Lancaster County, Nebraska reported a loss to follow-up rate of 74% (LeDoux, 2025). These findings are concerning, as even a mild hearing loss can negatively impact language development, quality of life, social skills, and educational and occupational outcomes (Lieu et al., 2020). The purpose of the current study is to develop, edit, and finalize educational documents for parents to receive after their child has failed a school hearing screening. This study utilizes a survey-based design. To

accomplish this, professionals who work with individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, including audiologists and related providers, were recruited to evaluate two documents: a medical referral document and an audiological referral document. Participants responded to questions assessing the clarity and perceived usefulness of the documents, as well as identifying any additions or revisions needed. The survey included Likert scale items, multiple-choice questions, and open-ended responses, all designed to guide improvements during the editing process. An additional open-ended question asked participants to identify relevant community resources and services, which were compiled to support families and help address barriers to follow-up care. It is hypothesized that audiological and related professionals will perceive the developed documents as useful for guiding next steps following a failed school hearing screening and will provide meaningful feedback to support the editing and finalization of the documents prior to distribution to families in Lancaster County, Nebraska school districts. This study is currently in progress; therefore, results are not yet available. It is anticipated that data collection will be complete and both educational documents will be revised and finalized by the time of the conference. The anticipated outcome of this project is the development of clear and practical educational materials that support timely follow-up and reduce barriers to care after failed school hearing screenings.

LeDoux, M. (2025). Hearing screenings: Lost to follow-up in elementary school children [Unpublished doctoral capstone project]. University of Nebraska–Lincoln.

Lieu, J. E. C., Kenna, M., Anne, S., & Davidson, L. (2020). Hearing loss in children: A review. *JAMA*, 324(21), 2195–2205. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2020.18912>

Learning Objectives:

- Describe the prevalence, implications, and contributing factors of loss to follow-up following failed school hearing screenings
- Identify strategies for supporting families in accessing audiological services and describe best practices for navigating referrals and follow-up care.

Lauren Paben earned her Bachelor of Speech-Language-Hearing Sciences from the University of Kansas in December 2023. She is currently pursuing her Doctor of Audiology (AuD) at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, with an expected graduation date of May 2028. Lauren is a participant in the MPUP-SPADE program at UNL, a federally funded, interprofessional training program that brings together audiology, speech-language pathology, and teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing to prepare graduate students to collaborate in serving children with disabilities. Through this program, she has gained experience working alongside professionals in related disciplines to support comprehensive, team-based care. Lauren has clinical experience serving both pediatric and adult populations, including diagnostic evaluation and the programming and use of hearing technology such as hearing aids and assistive listening devices. She also served as Volunteer Chair for the Student Academy of Audiology for the 2025-2026 school year. Her clinical and research interests center on pediatric audiology, with a particular focus on early identification and intervention for children with hearing loss. Her current capstone project, which focuses on improving

follow-up care after failed school hearing screenings, aligns with her goal of reducing barriers to care and improving outcomes for children and families.

Financial Disclosure Statement: Lauren Paben has no financial relationships to disclose.

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Kelly Pritchett, KP/AuD, CCC-A

Global Perspectives in Audiology: Exploring Training Programs and Service Delivery in Denmark and the United States

This study abroad experience provided students at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln the opportunity to explore international perspectives in audiology by examining similarities and differences in audiology training programs and service delivery between the United States and Denmark. Denmark is home to three major hearing aid manufacturers as well as a leading manufacturer of audiological diagnostic equipment. Through site visits to these companies, students observed firsthand the research and development efforts that drive innovation in hearing devices and clinical technology. This experience allowed students to gain a broader understanding of global approaches to audiology education, clinical practice, and hearing healthcare delivery.

Learning Objectives:

- Compare key similarities and differences between audiology training programs and service delivery models in the United States and Denmark.
- Describe the role of Danish hearing technology companies in the research, development, and advancement of hearing aids and audiological diagnostic equipment.
- Discuss how international exposure to audiology education, industry, and clinical practice can broaden students' understanding of global hearing healthcare delivery.

Kelly Pritchett, AuD, CCC-A earned her Doctor of Audiology degree from Drexel University (formerly Salus University) in 2007. She is a Professor of Practice in the Department of Special Education and Communication Disorders at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and serves as the Director of Clinical Operations for the Barkley Speech Language and Hearing Clinic. Dr. Pritchett's primary clinical interests include adult diagnostic audiology, hearing aid fittings, and vestibular assessment. In addition to her clinical leadership role, she teaches coursework in both the undergraduate Communication Disorders program and the Doctor of Audiology program.

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Speaker Non-Financial Disclosure Statement: Dr. Kelly Pritchett has no nonfinancial relationships to disclose.



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