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N U C A S L L

Northwestern | COMMUNICATION

Center for Audiology, Speech,
Language, and Learning

NEWS

Monthly updates from the
Northwestern University Center for
Audiology, Speech, Language, and
Learning



Welcome to our newsletter!

Each month, we share helpful articles on speech, language, and hearing, introduce members of our clinical team, offer a behind-the-scenes look at what to expect during appointments, and highlight upcoming community events and workshops.

Protecting Your Voice: Everyday Tips to Avoid Strain

Have you ever led a multi-day training, cheered on your favorite team, or spent an entire day participating in virtual meetings?

Excessive use of your voice, whether talking at a normal volume, shouting, singing, or even whispering for long periods of time, can leave you with hoarseness or loss of voice, vocal fatigue or pain, or even swelling of the vocal folds (which can lead to more serious issues).

Continued on page 2

Upcoming Events and Programs

Summer Literacy Camp

If your child is struggling with reading, this camp offers targeted support to build confidence and key literacy skills.

Two sessions available:

Aug 4–8

Aug 11–15

Breaking the Blocks

Did you know that improv can help with stuttering? Tweens and teens who stutter can register for this free workshop series.

Oct 6, 20, 27, Nov 3, 10

Spots are limited!

Learn more about these events and check out our [full event calendar](#).

Many people rely on their voice at work, home, or school but aren't always sure how to care for it. For those with ongoing challenges or health conditions affecting their voice, it's especially important to be gentle and mindful to avoid further strain.

So what can you do to help prevent or minimize vocal strain?

- Just like singing, do warm-ups before long speaking sessions (e.g., gentle humming, lip trills, sirens)
- Stay well hydrated (ideally starting the day before!)
- Use good vocal technique (projecting with breath support, not pushing from the throat)
- Pace yourself strategically (take breaks, even short ones, between sessions)
- Avoid throat clearing or whispering, which can make strain worse
- Use amplification tools (like a mic) to reduce your vocal effort in large rooms

While it's hard to avoid all symptoms of vocal overuse in long trainings or events, these habits can help reduce the risk and keep your voice stronger, longer.

Questions? Call our team and see how we can support your vocal health.



In the Community: Supporting Early Childhood Language Development

Since October 2024, NUCASLL has partnered with Brightpoint-Mitzi Freidheim, an early childhood and family center in Chicago's Englewood neighborhood, to help expand access to speech and language services for children facing economic hardship, housing insecurity, or foster care.

Led by Dr. Nathan Waller and Dr. Rylie Young, our graduate student clinicians provided both classroom-based enrichment and individualized support—reaching over 60 children, with 71% making significant progress toward communication goals. Students also gained hands-on experience in trauma-informed care by collaborating with Brightpoint's educators and social workers. We're proud to support this work building stronger foundations for young learners in our community.

Voice Care Tip: Did you know whispering can strain your voice even more when it's already tired? Learn more about caring for your voice with this [vocal health guide](#) from ASHA.

Not sure if hearing aids are right for you or a loved one? Learn what to expect from hearing aids and how they can help.

What to Expect from a Hearing Evaluation

Did you know? According to a 2021 American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) survey, 4 out of 5 of Americans say maintaining their hearing health is extremely important or very important to their quality of life. Yet, only 1 in 5 adults have had a hearing test in the past 5 years, compared with roughly 3 out of 5 who have had their vision tested. Untreated hearing loss can have negative impacts to our physical, mental, and emotional health.

Whether you've noticed a change in your hearing or simply want to check in on your hearing health, a hearing evaluation is a great first step. Here at NUCASLL, your visit begins with a thorough hearing evaluation and conversation with an audiologist. We'll explore how your hearing is affecting your daily life, relationships, and goals. If hearing loss is detected, your audiologist will help you understand your options and recommend a solution tailored to your needs and lifestyle.

For some, this might mean trying hearing devices—which we custom-fit and adjust to make sure they're comfortable and effective. We also offer tools, resources, and follow-up support to help you adjust and feel confident using your hearing technology in real-world situations.

Hearing care is personal, and we're here to guide you every step of the way.



Clinician Spotlight



Elizabeth Meyer

AuD, Northern Illinois University
BA, The University of Minnesota

Elizabeth Meyer's clinical interests are in diagnosing and treating adults with hearing impairment. She enjoys working with patients and helping them meet their communication goals. Dr. Meyer is active in community outreach and patient advocacy.

Did You Know?

*In the past year, NUCASLL graduate student clinicians contributed **7,200** hours of speech-language care across 121 students, and **3,600** hours of audiology care across 28 students. We're so grateful for their dedication in supporting our community!*