



Newsletter

April 2008

EARLY BEGINNINGS CLASS

Sound Beginnings has several components that provide service to children with hearing loss in Cache Valley and beyond. For children age 18 months to 36 months, one of the services that a child may qualify for is the Early Beginnings class.

This class, formerly called Toddler class, meets two mornings a week, and parents are an important part of each class session. The vocabulary, songs and books being used during the session are shared with parents so that they can cue their child individually throughout the class as the child needs. Some of the children are speaking words and short phrases clearly and others are just beginning to find their voice, so the individual parental cueing allows each child to engage in every activity throughout the session.



The Early Beginnings class during circle time.

One of the most important skills that the Early Beginnings class fosters is the socialization of young children. Children learn to attend and focus during circle time, to identify their names and the names of their friends and to share toys and books. At snack time, children learn social skills like asking for more, about passing food, and about staying at the table until everyone is finished. During free play, children can explore a variety of activities and toys, independently, and when they learn how, with others. Play and language go hand in hand in development; children use language to share with others their new discoveries made throughout the day.

The Early Beginnings class uses a literacy approach to curriculum development. This literacy approach allows for children to engage in shared book reading with the other children in class, and each language, art and learning activity is based on the chosen book. Using a literacy

approach allows for teaching early vocabulary, language structures and pre-academic skills in a developmentally appropriate, and fun, way.

Art activities expose the children to a variety of sensory experiences including sand painting, grasping crayons, using fingers in paint and glue, ripping paper and other activities. Even children who initially do not want to put their hands in the paint want to do it when they see the other children do it – and like it.



Charlotte and Reagan engage in a story as graduate student Julie reads to them.

The children in this class have a wide range of skills, in both language and motor areas. Parents assist their child in walking during circle time as well as picking up their cracker or holding their crayon correctly. When the weather is nice, the children get to move outside to the climbing gym in the Edith Bowen playground.

The activities, the vocabulary, the books are all things that parents can engage in at home with their child. The children learn quickly when concepts and vocabulary are presented in many environments. Parents become familiar with the routines and expectations and become teachers not only for their own child, but for the child seated next to them. You could say that in the Early Beginnings class, everyone is a student and a teacher at the same time. We invite you to be a student learner with us, please call Vicki Simonsmeier at (435) 797-7554 if you would like to schedule a visit to the class.



Braxton's mother Juliet prompts him during an activity.

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SPOTLIGHT

This month's spotlight is on Gavin Cornelius. Gavin is an energetic two year old boy who will soon turn three in May. He is enrolled in the Early Learning Group. Gavin always shows up to class, with a contagious smile on his face, ready to learn. Gavin has a caring family and both his mom, Becky, and his dad, Jason, actively participate in all of the Sound Beginnings activities. It is apparent through their participation that they are very supportive of their child.

Gavin has a five year old sister, Emma, who he looks up to and enjoys following around anywhere she goes. He likes to copy and imitate all that she does. He also likes helping around the house. Recently his family started re-finishing the basement and Gavin has found that he loves construction. He likes to play with the hammers and other tools, but one is never enough and he's often seen carrying several around the house at the same time.

Gavin likes to play with toy cars, trucks and trains. He is a "boy" in every sense of the word. When he arrives in the classroom he usually heads straight for the

toy bus. He enjoys putting the "people" in and out of the bus and takes special care to ensure each of them are in safe before driving it across the table. Gavin has recently started to enjoy playing outside and looks forward to this summer, when he can play outside even more.

Gavin is fun to work with in therapy and his clinicians have seen great improvements in Gavin's speech and language development since the start of the Sound Beginnings and look forward to working with him more over the next few years.



Gavin Cornelius

WEBSITE OFFERS INFORMATION

Interested in learning more about the Sound Beginnings program? A wealth of info is only a click away at <http://www.soundbeginnings.usu.edu>. Not only are the services offered by the Sound Beginnings program described, but you can also learn about upcoming events, become better acquainted with the faculty and staff, and find local and national resources for families of children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

The website continues to evolve with new features continually being added. For example, last month, video



Our Background | Programs & Services | Resources | Training Opportunities | Directions

Sound Beginnings of Cache Valley

Sound Beginnings of Cache Valley is an early education program that provides home- and center-based services to children with hearing loss whose families want their children to learn to listen and talk.

Sound Beginnings is located on the campus of Utah State University, Communicative Disorders and Deaf Education Department, Logan, Utah.

Map & Directions :: Contact Us

What Do Families Think About Sound Beginnings?

(click to hear their stories)

Our Background | Programs & Services | News for Families

Children receiving intervention before one year of age are able to make greater gains in their ability to listen and talk... more

Sound Beginnings offers a variety of programs and services to children with hearing loss and their families... more

Many other activities are scheduled to help families learn and grow:
• Calendar
• School Dates
• Special Events

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clips were added in which family members talk about their experiences with the Sound Beginnings program...parents and grandparents of some of the children talk about what they like about the program, how their children are progressing, and what advice they would offer to families who might be considering enrollment in Sound Beginnings.

If you have suggestions for features that would make it a more valuable website, click on the "Contact Us" link and let us know how we can make it more useful for you.

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