



The Audiology Fruit and the String Bean

Carol Flexer, PhD: So, what do we mean by the “speech bean,” Jane?

Jane Madell, PhD: Well, you know that big gray area on this slide that you’re seeing here, is what we’ve called the “speech banana” or the “audiology fruit.” It’s important to understand—and we talk about this in the speech perception segments—it’s important to understand that there is speech information throughout the speech banana. If you have an audiogram—either an unaided or, even worse—an aided audiogram, that is not at the top of the speech banana, it means that the child is going to be missing a lot of information. So what we have here is what we’d like to call the “speech string bean.” We want kids to be hearing in the string bean because that means they’re going to be hearing about 90% of what was said. If they’re hearing at the bottom of the banana, they’re only going to hear 10% of what is said. So, for kids with hearing loss, if the family has chosen listening and spoken language, our goal is to have them hear at the top of the string bean.

Carol Flexer, PhD: Right, because that means that we have the highest probability of getting complete speech information through the “doorway” to the brain. Remember, the brain can only work with the information it receives. And if we do not give that brain full information, then we’re making that child function with a huge disadvantage.