

REMOTE MICROPHONES INCREASE YOUR CHILD'S ACCESS TO ALL SOUNDS OF SPEECH

Dr. Caraway: Studies have found that the use of a remote microphone at home increases the number of words a child is able to hear by as many as 5,300 words per day. Why is this important? Because every word your child hears builds a connection in their brain and helps them learn to listen and talk, and thousands more words each day, simply by wearing a remote microphone? Yes, please. In this video I'll explain what a remote microphone is, how they work, why they matter, and why you don't need to wait for your child to start school to begin using one.

Hi, I'm Dr. Teresa Caraway with Hearing First, and we're here to help and support families just like yours who have a child with hearing loss. We want to empower you as your child learns to listen, talk, read, and thrive, just like kids with typical hearing.

Remote microphones can make a big difference in the number of words and sentences your child hears and how well they can hear all the sounds of speech, especially at a distance or in a noisy environment.

What is it exactly? A remote microphone is a two-piece device. One piece is a wireless microphone you wear that sends the sounds of your voice directly to your child's hearing device. The microphone is sometimes referred to as a transmitter, and the second piece connects, or is part of your child's hearing device, and it's referred to as a receiver, because it receives the signal from your microphone. They use wireless digital radio signals, similar to Bluetooth, to carry your voice from the microphone to your child's receiver.

There are different kinds of remote mics that work with hearing aids, cochlear implants, or bone conduction systems. Your pediatric audiologist will know which kind is appropriate for your child. Using remote mics increases parent-child conversations and serves as a really helpful reminder that you should play the role of narrator and talk, talk, talk throughout their day.

Some other reported benefits of using remote mics are:

- Improved attention,
- Faster response when called,

- Less effort and fatigue,
- Improved communication and speech, and
- Increased independence and confidence.

Often parents learn about remote mics when their child starts school as they're helpful in the classroom, but you don't need a noisy classroom as a reason to use one with your child, and you definitely don't have to wait until they're school aged. You can use a remote microphone while at home, in the car, at the store, on the playground, and more, and you can start even before your little one begins to crawl and is on the move.

As a parent, you and your child may spend a lot of time in the car, driving to appointments, or picking siblings up from school. There is so much happening all around you as you're driving. Why not share the experience with your child so they can hear everything you have to say. With a remote microphone, they can hear it all. "Oh, I see a big yellow school bus."

And remote microphones aren't just for you as a parent, anyone who spends time with your child can wear the remote microphone. Whether your child is in daycare, spending the weekend with grandparents or listening to story time at the library.

Let's see how Hunter and Riley's family approached using remote microphones at their school.

- Mom:** Hunter is in second grade and Riley's in kindergarten, soon to be third grade and first grade. And I'm their mom.
- Teacher:** I see, I see.
- Children:** What do you see?
- Teacher:** I see children swimming in a pool.
- Mom:** The anxiety of a parent that's leaving like the nice safe bubble of the pre-K years had a lot to do with just the unknown and what to expect.
- Teacher:** I see, I see.
- Children:** What do you see?
- Teacher:** I see you doing your favorite hobby or activity during the summer, show me.
- Mom:** Going to preschool, the girls were in a nice bubble where their peers, a lot of them had hearing aids or cochlear implants, so that was the normal.
- Teacher:** If you can hear me, clap three times. Where should your eyes be?
- Riley:** You?
- Teacher:** Thank you.

Mom: From there, we started looking at elementary schools and we were looking at putting 'em in a school where there were no other kids with hearing loss and had maybe never seen a child with hearing loss before, and so that whole prospect is just terrifying.

Teacher: Henry.

Henry: Three gills and damp skin, all fish need oxygen to breathe.

Teacher: Hunter is the first student that I've worked with that has cochlear implants, it's been quite a learning experience. But with the support of family, it's been much, much easier to accommodate than I ever imagined possible. Hunter, I would love to hear from you.

Hunter: For most fish being left on land would be a big problem, but it's not a problem for the mudskipper.

Teacher: Awesome job, that was beautiful. That was excellent, thank you so much.

Hunter: She speaks louder now that she has me in her class 'cause my ears, they're not regular ears, they're just like cochlear plants. They have FM boots bit so I can hear here outta my FM and, yeah.

Teacher: This simply functions as a microphone and this is the speaker that goes with the microphone. I'll also use her FM that connects directly to her cochlear implants.

Hunter: When I can't hear the teacher, I always go and say, "Ms. Feeney, I can't hear you," or, "Would you speak louder?"

Dr. Caraway: If you have more questions about getting started with remote mics, talk to your pediatric audiologist, they can answer your questions, will make sure your child's remote microphone is working well, and they'll make sure you know how to use it and care for it. Your intervention provider will coach you about how and when to use the remote mic system and make sure you bring the remote mic to all your appointments.

If you'd like to learn more about remote mics, we have an incredible webinar for you with a pediatric audiologist. It's free to sign up and learn. Just click the link below.

Wherever you are on this journey and however you may be feeling, you are not alone. Hearing First is here to help you every step of the way. Subscribe to the YouTube channel for the latest videos and visit hearingfirst.org to find more resources and support on this journey.