Psychosocial development encompasses emotional, social and behavioural domains. The development of language forms the basis for a child to establish relationships, make friends, and engage in social interactions.

The LOCHI study shows that the majority of children were within the normal range on a screening test of emotional and behavioural outcomes at 5 years. However, there was a proportion of children who were rated by their parents to have greater difficulties in social skills and lower scores in behaviour, compared to scores of typically developing children.

In order to investigate this further with the goal of developing targeted intervention to help children who exhibit problems, Dr Cara Wong, a Clinical Neuropsychology Registrar at NAL, has commenced the Cognitive, Language and Social Skills (CLASS) study. This sub-study of LOCHI aims to explore whether emotional recognition skills, theory of mind (ability to understand other people’s perspectives), and executive function (ability to plan and regulate behaviour) are related to language and social skills in children with hearing loss. We are currently recruiting children who have completed the 9 year LOCHI assessment, with no additional disabilities, and who are willing to travel to the Hearing Hub at the Macquarie University (Ryde, Sydney) for testing. On completion of testing, feedback will be provided to individual families. If you are interested in participation, please contact Dr Wong at cara.wong@nal.gov.au or 02 9412 6783 for more information.

Preliminary data from 10 children have revealed that common problems exist with auditory (i.e. listening) attention, dividing attention between two different sets of auditory information, and recognising emotions in children’s voices. We also found that poorer performance on a test of impulsivity was associated with more behavioural problems; and poorer emotion recognition of faces was associated with more feelings of loneliness and social dissatisfaction. In this and in future Newsletters, we will include a section on Tips for improving psychosocial skills.

**Tips and Strategies to Improve Emotion Recognition and Social Skills**

- Teach and discuss language to identify and express more complex or subtle feelings (e.g. jealous, annoyed, embarrassed, frustrated, confident etc).
- Teach children how to identify what different emotions look like on the face and body/posture, as well as tone of voice.
- Social competence can be facilitated with direct instruction/modelling, e.g. discussions about how to respond appropriately to social cues, use words to describe what s/he should have done or said, and be the role model of good social skills yourself!
- Use ‘self-talk’ so that your child is aware of what you are thinking and how that affects the choices you make.
- Reinforce good social behaviours in your child and be specific about what s/he did well, as well as praise for effort.
- Involve in organised social activities with a wide range of children. For those students who are interested in making new friends and sharing experiences with other children with hearing loss we have listed some activities in the table below.
- There are a number of social and emotional skills training programs available if your child has particular difficulties in these areas. We have also listed some programs below.
- A comprehensive list of social skills techniques/activities can be found here [http://www.socialskillscentral.com/free/101_Ways_Teach_Children_Social_Skills.pdf](http://www.socialskillscentral.com/free/101_Ways_Teach_Children_Social_Skills.pdf)

### Social activities for Children with hearing loss

**NSW**

- Sydney University – The Veronica James Science Challenge for Hearing Impaired Children. sydney.edu.au/medicine/pathology/vjscc/
- Mt Druitt Lions Club – NSW High School Deaf Camp. Email: mountdruittlionsclub@gmail.com

**VIC**

- Deaf Children Australia’s Recreation Program. deafchildrenaustralia.org.au/recreation/
- Arts Access Victoria - Deaf Arts Network (DAN) program. artsaccess.com.au/events/

**QLD**

- Deaf Services QLD - Auslan camps. deafservicesqld.org.au/Services/Education/Camps

### Social Skills Group Training

**NSW**

- Cool Kds – Macquarie University Centre for Emotional Health, Ph: 02 9580 8711
- Capable Kids Social Skills Training Group – UNSW Psychology Clinic, Ph: 9385 0342

**VIC**

- Social Skills Group - Victoria University, Ph: 03 9919 2353
- Cool Kds Online - Macquarie University Centre for Emotional Health, Ph: 02 9580 8711

**QLD**

- Friends for Life Program www.friendsprograms.com/
- Cool Kds Online - Macquarie University Centre for Emotional Health, Ph: 02 9580 8711
Lessons from LOCHI – Factsheets for Parents Launch

Many thanks to all the families of children participating in the LOCHI study for your ongoing support! Our Speech Pathologists and Audiologists have been busy travelling around the country visiting your children at school, or in Australian Hearing centres. By mid 2017, we aim to complete all evaluations of children who have turned 9 years of age. That is an important milestone for the study! The results of the LOCHI study have helped to change the way services are provided to children with hearing loss, both in Australia and overseas. We want to share with you the important findings, because it is due to your participation that we can continue to learn how best to manage hearing loss in children to optimise their outcomes.

We will post a series of factsheets called ‘Lessons from LOCHI’ on our website www.outcomes.nal.gov.au. The first one will be on the LOCHI study aims; and future topics will include Hearing Aid Prescriptions, Auditory Neuropathy Spectrum Disorder, Early Reading Skills, and Psycho-social Skills.

How would you like to receive the newsletter?

Would you like to receive the newsletter by email instead? It’s a lot faster than regular mail and it’s better for the environment too. Please let us know by sending us an email: outcomes@nal.gov.au and include your child’s name (if applicable).

If you know of someone who may like to receive the newsletter, please let us know as well!

Congratulations to Noel Crowther (LOCHI participant) and Corrynne Hobbs (LOCHI parent) who won the prize for participating in the Online Social Participation, Social Capital and Literacy of Adolescents with Hearing Loss survey! Noel (pictured on the right) opted to receive an iPad mini while Corrynne chose the Westfield gift voucher option.

A big ‘thank you’ from the LOCHI team to all participants for your valuable participation in our research over all these years!