

# LICA In Your School

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## LICA staff are your gateway to resources and referrals

**Matthew** was absent for several days with an ear infection. He came back to school on the day his class was participating in hearing screenings. He didn't pass the screening that day or a follow-up screening two days later. The school nurse contacted LICA. An audiologist reviewed Matthew's paperwork and recommended that his parents schedule another visit to the pediatrician. The doctor saw that the infection hadn't cleared, and after 10 days on a different antibiotic, Matthew passed his screening.

The school nurse received a report from a community audiologist about **Jane**, a second grader who is hard of hearing. The nurse contacted a LICA audiologist who arranged a meeting with school staff to review and interpret the report and its implications in the school environment. Together, they developed a plan to meet Jane's academic and social needs.

**Nate** recently moved into the district and joined the fourth grade. He seems to be making friends with classmates and does well academically. He wears hearing aids in both ears and knows how to change the batteries without assistance. His classroom teacher spoke with the LICA itinerant teacher who works with another student in the school to see how to best support Nate's continued success.

### Supporting nurses, teachers, administrators

These stories are just a few of the hundreds that LICA staff members tell about how children with hearing loss can be identified and served in many different ways. It's LICA's job to support school nurses, teachers, and administrators as they help students who are deaf or hard of hearing succeed at school.

LICA's staff of 65 includes audiologists, speech/language therapists, social workers, psychologists, teachers who work in self-contained classrooms, and itinerant teachers who travel to provide services to students in the students' local schools. We work with our schools to tailor solutions to fit each individual student, and we re-evaluate our strategies as students grow and their needs change.

### Addressing academic and social issues

When school nurses and teachers contact LICA, they often begin working with the educational audiologist assigned to their school. Our audiologists are expert in evaluating the impact of hearing loss within school environments, and they focus their evaluations and recommendations on promoting meaningful academic progress and social integration for the student.

Through relationships with teachers and staff, LICA audiologists work with the entire school population, helping schools understand state hearing test compliance requirements, researching proposed purchases of assistive listening devices (ALDs), participating in Individual Educational Plan (IEP)

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*Audiologists continued from page 1*

meetings, and helping schools explore the need for other services that LICA provides.

### When to call LICA

“The sooner LICA gets involved with the student, the family, the teachers, and the school administrators, the sooner that child

will get needed services,” Judy Elkayam, LICA audiologist, said. “I tell everyone in my districts: When you hear or read the words ‘hearing loss,’ ‘hearing aid,’ or ‘ALD’ in reference to one of your kids, call LICA.”

From the  
Executive Director



## Call LICA for students are deaf or hard of hearing

Welcome to the first issue of *LICA in Your School*, a newsletter for classroom teachers, nurses, administrators, and other staff in the schools of the districts we serve. We’ll publish *LICA in Your School* three times a year: as school starts, after the holidays, and as you’re preparing to wrap up the school year. Our aim is to keep you up-to-date about the services LICA offers to your students who are deaf or hard of hearing and to their families.

We rely on you to help us connect to the families who need our support, so take a quick read through the information here, and if you have a student you believe could

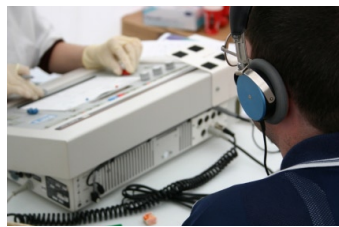
benefit from a referral to LICA, call us. We’ll work with you to determine what kinds of support your student needs to succeed academically and socially. Also, we’ll welcome your feedback on *LICA in Your School* and your suggestions on what stories or information you’d like to see here. Just send a quick email to [rstreit@lica.k12.il.us](mailto:rstreit@lica.k12.il.us).

All the best for a wonderful school year!

Becki Streit  
Executive Director

Legal Beat 

## Know your school’s hearing testing responsibility



You can’t see hearing loss. It can disguise itself as a behavioral issue. It can hide behind a more visible disability. It can be quiet and easy to miss in the activity of the school day. But hearing loss—even a loss labeled “mild”—is a disability that can have lifelong impact.

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) Child Vision and Hearing Test Act requires annual hearing screening services for children in grades K-3, children in any special education class, children referred for testing by a teacher, and transfer students.

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The IDPH recommends, but does not require, additional hearing screening in grades 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12.

### LICA helps schools comply with IDPH regulations

LICA can help you understand the requirements for compliance, including recommendations for follow-up for students whose screening results indicate a need for additional action. We’ll help with testing for students whose disabilities preclude participation in regular school screenings.

Children with hearing loss are under-identified and, because of this, are underserved. Who in your school has a hearing loss? How will you support that student’s success? LICA serves your district as a partner in finding solutions.

# Introducing the Leopoldos



*Dillon Leopoldo*

Meet Dillon Leopoldo. Dillon is a football-, baseball-, basketball-playing nine-year-old with a quick smile. He likes to go on vacation with his family, especially to places where he can swim.

Dillon attends Highland Elementary School in Skokie District 68 where his favorite subjects are gym, music, art, and math. Dillon also has a significant hearing loss.

## Technology aids learning

Dillon wears hearing aids in both ears and his classroom teacher wears the microphone for an assistive listening device (ALD) on a lanyard around her neck. The ALD focuses the sound of her voice as it is transmitted wirelessly to the receivers on Dillon's hearing aids. Gloria Ellenbaum, Dillon's itinerant teacher from LICA, meets with him twice a week at Highland to provide support in areas that can be challenging to students who are hard of hearing, like vocabulary, reading and auditory skill development.

Because it's helpful for everyone at Highland to understand Dillon's needs, Ms. Ellenbaum led an in-service presentation for teachers early in the year and introduced herself to his classmates as well. Later in the year, she helped Dillon create a PowerPoint presentation for his class. He taught them about hearing loss—his own and other kinds, the parts of the ear, and how hearing aids and the ALD work. At the end of each section, he conducted a pop quiz and answered questions.

## All in the family

Dillon's four siblings—Addy, 11; Caleb, 8; Kyle, 7; and Brooklyn, 4—all know Dillon's



*From the top: Brooklyn, Kyle, Dillon, and Addy. Brother Caleb was at sports camp.*

itinerant teacher and his audiologist, too. That's because all five of the Leopoldo children benefit from LICA's services.

Addy's hearing loss is mild and stable. Her hearing is monitored at LICA with regular audiograms, and where she sits

in her classroom is designed to make it easier for her to follow her teacher.

Caleb has a moderate hearing loss in one ear only. He wore a hearing aid until it was determined that the amplification was distracting to him at school and not making the best use of the hearing he has. Like Addy, Caleb visits LICA's offices regularly for monitoring.

## LICA is family

Like Dillon, Kyle and Brooklyn wear hearing aids and work with Gloria, even though Brooklyn is not yet out of preschool at the Oakton Community College Early Childhood Center. But Dillon is quick to tell you that he got his hearing aids first.

"LICA is extended family to us," mom Phoebe Leopoldo says. "The staff is knowledgeable, straightforward, and articulate about options. They make the educational decisions for my kids that I would make, and they have been a fantastic resource and support for other difficult decisions, like whether to consider cochlear implants."

## Attitude is everything

The Leopoldos are matter-of-fact about the realities of hearing loss. "You brush your teeth, you put on your shoes, you put in your hearing aids," Phoebe said. "We give the kids the

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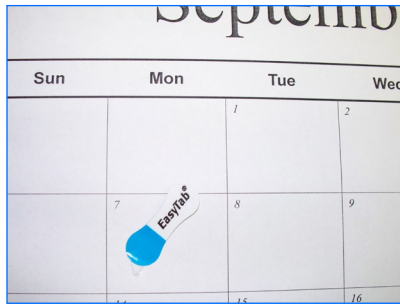
responsibility of caring for their equipment (with our supervision, of course), and they do it.”

A sense of humor comes in handy, too. “Sometimes we attract attention just because there are so many of us,” Phoebe said. “One

day we were out shopping and an older woman approached me to ask what my kids were wearing on their ears. She thought it was some kind of new electronic game and wanted to get it for her grandson!”

Tech Tip 

## Battery basics



varies, but they typically last 10 to 14 days. If you have a child in your classroom using hearing aids or an ALD, chances are good that you’ll need to know when and how to change the battery. Here are some useful guidelines:

- Track and anticipate battery changes by marking your calendar. The protective sticker that activates the battery can serve as an easy visual reminder.

The life of batteries for hearing aids and assistive listening devices (ALDs)

- Hearing aid and ALD batteries are activated when exposed to air. Remove the sticker on the back of the new battery and wait at least 10 seconds before installing it.
- ALDs used in conjunction with a hearing aid are powered by the hearing aid battery. The battery life will likely be reduced by the additional device. And when battery life is low, the hearing aid may continue to function even if the ALD will not.
- Batteries most commonly used in devices for children are size 13 or 312, although there are other sizes.
- A battery tester can determine the remaining life in a hearing aid battery. School personnel can purchase hearing aid testers through LICA. You might want to keep a tester and extra batteries on hand.

### Help us reach out!

We want to be sure that *LICA in Your School* reaches everyone it should. Please ask your colleagues if they’ve received this publication and forward the email addresses of any who haven’t, but should. Send email addresses to [licainyourschool@lica.k12.il.us](mailto:licainyourschool@lica.k12.il.us).

### Get help fast!

Who do you call when you have a question for or about LICA? [Click here](#) for a handy reference guide to who’s who in our office and who works with your district. We’re ready to help!