



John Tracy Center's Pandemic Response 2019-2020

Program Impact

During the pandemic, JTC continues to be committed to meeting the needs of those in our programs. The families we serve are primarily low-income, meaning that statistically, their children with hearing loss are less likely to receive timely diagnostic follow-up, equal access to hearing aids or cochlear implants, and early intervention. Our client families were already grappling with economic challenges and the issues of raising a child with hearing loss before the current public health and economic crises. For children with hearing loss, delays in diagnosis and intervention can create a developmental emergency. Language acquisition begins at birth, so delays can have a major impact on all future learning and development. For this reason, JTC had to move quickly to maintain services.

We closed our facility on March 16, 2020, including audiology services, which must be delivered in person. In total, we postponed 249 audiology appointments. Newborn testing resumed on May 17, 2020, and booth testing began again on July 20. We continue to allow more time for cleaning between appointments.

In March, our IT department worked around the clock to transition all our educational services online in just two days. Because JTC has a well-established curriculum for online distance education, we did not need to extensively develop or adapt curriculum for online learning. The programs being delivered online now are

- Individual listening and spoken language (LSL) therapy and speech-language pathology (SLP)
- Parent-Infant program, Friday Family School classes and support groups (ages 0-3)
- Educational support from our teachers of the deaf & hard of hearing for children with hearing loss in mainstream schools (ages 5-18)
- Counseling sessions and support groups (ages 0-18)
- Worldwide distance education program (ages 0-5)
- Ross Preschool (ages 3-5) is available online or in person.

Financial Impact

JTC had to incur additional costs, e.g., equipment and software for staff to deliver services from home, materials for families, a server to store videos and photos that therapists use in demonstrations for parents, personal protective equipment, thermometers, and cleaning supplies. Also, JTC lost revenue when it had to close audiology services in March 2020 and postpone 249 appointments. Now, audiology appointments are spaced out for cleaning, so we can see fewer children per day. Other revenue losses include cancellation of multiple fundraising events and international summer sessions.