

June 14, 2018

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Come September, your family will be entering your last year of early intervention services. Congratulations! This is sure to be a very special year for you and your child, as you prepare for Kindergarten.

Kindergarten is a year full of fun and adventure; however, it is around this time when parents are often faced with making tough decisions for their child who is deaf or hard-of-hearing. As children transition from preschool into Kindergarten, some parents may find it scary and stressful as well as exciting and new. This is not a transition that takes place overnight. It takes months of planning and working with your early intervention team of professionals to determine your child's needs, classroom supports and what school placement will be most appropriate for them and their learning style. Starting this process now and becoming involved in a program such as PEER can help ensure you have the information you need to make informed choices and that your child is set up for the most successful transition possible.

The PEER program, developed by BC Family Hearing Resource Centre, is designed to educate parents about how to effectively advocate for their child's specific needs **as related to hearing loss** in school settings. PEER is delivered by highly trained staff including certified Teachers of the Deaf & Hard-of-Hearing, Speech & Language Pathologists, a Listening & Spoken Language Therapist and our Family Support Parents. **PEER is available to both local & outreach families.** PEER teaches parents about the challenges deaf and hard-of-hearing children face in school settings. These challenges present themselves in many ways and research shows that children with hearing loss are at risk for social, emotional and academic difficulties. PEER can help families recognize signs and symptoms of these issues and help alleviate any potential fears about entering Kindergarten. PEER also provides an opportunity for parents to ask questions and engage in discussion with staff and other parents (past and present) who are also experiencing or who have already experienced this journey.

The PEER program consists of **7 evening parent sessions**, once a month that are approximately 1.5 hours in length. We will provide families with more information on how sessions will be provided, early in September. Sessions will be accessible to all and it is mandatory for parents to take part in these sessions if wanting their children to take part in the classroom later in the year. Catch up on a session will be possible if missed.

**Vancouver Satellite Centre**

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PH: 604-428-7949 FAX: 604-428-7950  
EMAIL: [info@bcfamilyhearing.com](mailto:info@bcfamilyhearing.com)

**Main Surrey Centre**

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**Victoria Satellite Centre**

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At the end of the 7 evening parent sessions, you are invited to join us, at our Surrey Centre, for our **3-day PEER** taking place on **May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019**. This is a chance for all of the parents, who have been participating in the PEER evening sessions (local & outreach), to meet in person and to have the opportunity, through panels, to hear from and ask questions of, parents, hard-of-hearing youth and/or young adults and hearing professionals providing equipment and support to your child. Parents will also learn about the supports available to your family as you leave your early intervention years. **3-day PEER** also offers a classroom experience **for children who will be going into mainstream classrooms without the need for one-on-one support** and parents will have the opportunity to observe their child in an accessible classroom setting as their child gets to know other children who have hearing loss and who use hearing aids, DM's and cochlear implants. You will see firsthand how the children are being encouraged to take responsibility for their own equipment and listening checks, are taught to advocate for themselves in challenging listening situations, and are encouraged to become the "Boss of their Hearing Loss!"

The monthly evening sessions and the May three-day workshop are filled with information and ideas that are designed to support you as you begin this journey with your child. Your child's formal educational career is about to start; which means your job as their first and most important teacher and advocate is more important than ever!

If you require further information, please contact Cathy Luther at 604-584-2827 or email her at [cluther@bcfamilyhearing.com](mailto:cluther@bcfamilyhearing.com). The toll free number for out-of-town families is 1-877-584-2827.

The **registration deadline** for the PEER evening sessions is **September 30<sup>th</sup>**, however we strongly urge you to register as soon as possible. Please complete the registration by clicking on this link: <https://goo.gl/6HZHbE>

There is no fee for our BCFHRC clients for this program; however, there will be a \$30 fee for the PEER binder, which will be collected at the time of registration.

We are looking forward to working with you and your child during this extraordinary time in your family's life.

Sincerely,

**Cathy Luther**  
Family Support Parent

**Teresa Kazemir**  
Speech & Language  
Pathologist

**Jen Gow**  
Family Support Parent

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