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Improving Your Practice with Pediatric Audiology Specialty Certification

By John Coverstone

Any pediatric audiologist is acutely aware that it requires specialized knowledge and skills to diagnose and treat hearing and balance disorders in a pediatric population. This population requires

special needs that differ from older populations. It requires a specific knowledge and skill set to obtain information from the child who does not want or know how to give it. Practical application and pediatric

ABA Board Profile



Barbara L. Kurman, AuD

Hails from: Upper Saddle River, NJ

Year Certified: 1999

Degree: AuD

What I Do for the ABA: As a newly elected member of the Board of Governors, I enjoyed my first board meeting in November 2011 and was able to participate at all levels. In addition, I believe that those of us who are certified by the ABA should act as ABA ambassadors to encourage everyone to become ABA certified.

In My Free Time: I sing with my temple choir, I am vice president of the Board of Governors of Hillel at Syracuse University, Sisterhood Board of my temple, and spend as much time with my husband and adult children as possible.

Quote to Live by: "Action may not always bring happiness; but there is no happiness without action."
Benjamin Disraeli

audiology knowledge are required to successfully work with children and be able to disseminate appropriate information to parents, physicians, and educational personnel regarding the overall needs of the child.

By obtaining specialty certification in pediatric audiology, it makes a statement that the audiologist demonstrates a significant level of knowledge and expertise that sets him or her apart from others in the profession. While a certification is not a guarantee of a particular skill or competency, an audiologist holding this certification has demonstrated the ability to pass a rigorous examination in pediatric audiology and has a minimum of two years of audiological practice.

To date, 13 audiologists have passed the early examinations and achieved pediatric audiology specialty certification (PASC). It is anticipated that a large number of audiologists will sit for the examination following AudiologyNOW! 2012 in Boston. These audiologists, as pediatric specialists, recognize the benefit of this credential and wish to promote themselves and their facilities as centers of excellence in this area. The American Board of Audiology (ABA) has been contacted by directors of audiology settings announcing their intentions to have their audiologists achieve PASC. In addition, the ABA has already received inquiries from prospective employers looking to hire audiologists holding pediatric certification. A need for pediatric audiologists has been identified in our profession, and prospective employers are increasingly recognizing that a credential such as PASC will help them to identify higher level qualified candidates for positions needing to be filled.

In speaking with those who have sought pediatric audiology specialty certification, and many subject matter experts involved with creating the exam, a number of benefits have been expressed for the PASC.

- Many audiologists have sought the recognition associated with achieving certification that includes a rigorous examination.
- Many audiologists have also expressed a desire to demonstrate their commitment to this area of our profession and their dedication to maintaining a current knowledge set in pediatrics.

The ABA has already received inquiries from prospective employers looking to hire audiologists holding pediatric certification.

- Some audiologists are looking or hoping to improve salaries.
- Some audiologists have recognized the increased marketability of a certified audiologist when seeking employment in a facility that attracts children.

Audiologists have also recognized the benefits of promoting pediatric audiology specialty certification to those outside our profession.



Join us in extending our congratulations to the most recent class of Pediatric Audiology Specialty Certification certificants!

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- Physicians and other audiologists may be more likely to refer patients to an audiologist holding specialty certification.
- A clinical facility can promote itself as a “center of excellence” with greater confidence.
- Promoting an audiologist holding pediatric specialty certification is likely to gain increased trust from families, other audiologists (primary care audiologists, for instance), and referring physicians.
- Those audiologists who have earned specialty certification are also listed on the ABA Web site, which will increasingly serve as a central resource for those organizations seeking an audiologist who is a pediatric specialist.

Reviewing the preparatory materials located on the ABA Web site—all of which were carefully chosen to cover the domains of knowledge created from an in-depth analysis of a pediatric audiologist—has been reported as a valuable tool itself to improve knowledge of pediatric practitioners. The published domains of knowledge and the reference materials available on the ABA Web site may also help direct study efforts for audiologists wanting to move into pediatrics. This should also serve to assist the individual in determining whether pediatric audiology is the right specialty area for him or her to consider. Likewise, students may use this information to see whether they have knowledge gaps that should be filled before entering professional practice. Educators may use the same materials to guide curriculum and ensure that complete pediatric instruction is provided to students.

General audiologists may also use the PASC to identify preferred pediatric facilities and providers to which their own patients may be referred. By referring to pediatric audiologists holding PASC, we can ensure that we are referring to practitioners who have proven their knowledge in pediatrics through a rigorous examination and have the necessary years of experience.

Audiologists wishing to achieve pediatric audiology specialty certification must hold a graduate degree in audiology and a valid license to practice audiology. They must demonstrate a minimum of two years of full-time paid professional experience as an audiologist, with 550 hours in direct contact with pediatric patients and 50 hours in case management of pediatric cases in two of the past five years. Applicants must forward two letters of recommendation citing experience in pediatric audiology along with the application and the application and examination fee. Full details and the application form may be obtained by visiting www.americanboardofaudiology.org or contacting ABA at 800-881-5410 or aba@audiology.org.

The next PASC examination will be given in Boston, April 1, 2012, immediately following AudiologyNOW! If you practice pediatric audiology, now is the time to submit your application and join those who have demonstrated a high level of knowledge in pediatrics! **AB**

John Coverstone, AuD, is a member of the ABA Board of Governors.