

# Hearing Program Brings New Sound To Babies' World



LEARNING TO LISTEN with a hearing aid in Redford Union's Infant Counseling program for hearing-impaired children is small Alex Hay of Northville. His teacher, Mrs. Sandra Bajorek, is playing a game to teach him to

understand the sentence "Take it off," and his father, Robert Hay, is watching proceedings so he can continue the training at home. Alex is nearly three.

## observing life

A baby's first year is filled with sounds—his mother's voice, his father's step, a telephone ringing, the cat's meow, the hum of family activity.

So if lack of hearing cuts him off from those sounds, his loss is tremendous. Now, there is hope and help for babies with profound hearing impairments— and their parents—in a new Infant Counseling Program in Redford Union Schools.

Available to children in six school districts, the counseling service is the start of a complete program of education for hearing-impaired children from birth through high school.

The goal is to give children the auditory and language training necessary so they can lead normal lives as adults in a hearing world.

Eligible to participate are babies from birth to age three who live in Garden City, Livonia, Northville, Redford Union, South Redford or Cherry Hill school districts. The service is free, with the cost shared by the state and the sending school district.

At this time five babies are enrolled. They range in age from ten to 34 months. The new program for infants begins at birth, or as soon as a child's severe hearing impairment is suspected.

"The years from birth to three are the most important time of language development for any child," observed Mrs. Sandra Bajorek, teacher, "and for children with hearing handicaps, the years of normal language development are even more precious."

For a baby with normal hearing ability, the first year of life is a time of auditory input—a time when he hears the words of his parents and the sounds of his world, mostly at home. Between a year and 18 months the toddler begins to say words, and by three years, he is talking in sentences.

Infants who have profound hearing impairments learn to understand language and speak in the same developmental steps as the hearing child. But it takes more input, more time, and special training for these children.

The parents are eager to help. The program helps them learn how.

Every baby no matter how profound his hearing loss has some small, precious amount of residual hearing ability. Mrs. Bajorek explained. With modern technology and proper early training, the child can learn to hear with amplification.

"The first day a hearing-impaired baby gets a hearing aid is the first day of his life that he hears," she said. "It's like the day of his birth in language development and hearing," declared Mrs. Bajorek. "And that day can never come too early!" she emphasized.

Seeing the baby with his first hearing device is a red letter day for parents and teacher.

The infants are delighted with the new dimension of sound in their world, and each baby shows his happiness in his own way. One laughs. Another gurgles whenever he hears a sound. One kicks her heels in her excitement. A little boy cries when it's time to take it off.

The babies receive training with hearing amplification devices before they go to clinics or hospitals or examination and evaluation of their hearing impairments.

The child is trained to respond to sounds he hears by making a signal with a toy he is given. The training before the evaluation results in more accurate testing. The hospital or clinic recommends the type hearing aid suitable for the baby, after testing his hearing ability, examining his ears, and completing a physical examination.

A hearing device is loaned by the program until the baby's own device arrives. From the time the hearing handicap is discovered, Mrs. Bajorek begins working with the baby and his parents at their home.

Before the child ever receives clinical testing, she demonstrates techniques to be used by the parents to communicate with their baby.

She shows the mother how to hold the infant close to her chest, where the child can better hear and feel the words as the mother goes through a simple picture book, naming the objects distinctly as she shows them to the child.

The teacher and parents make an inventory of the sounds of the home. In the kitchen, for instance, there are pots and pans, drawers opening and closing, water running, phones ringing, and doors closing.

Mrs. Bajorek shows parents how to call attention to the sounds of the home; how to demonstrate what makes the sound; and what sort of language to use to tell the child about the object.

She stresses how important it is for parents to talk to their babies, even at times when they are not using amplification.

The baby is brought to a school room at Keeler School for individual training sessions with mother and teacher when he is able to walk, and otherwise ready for the new setting. With a parent close by, Mrs. Bajorek uses whatever toy the toddler wants that day as a tool for a lesson in speech development she has planned for the child. The mother then may use the example at home.

There are many irresistible learning tools in the classroom. Mirrors of all sizes have great appeal for babies, and a training unit with a microphone lets the toddler hear himself speak.

"We are observing that older children who began monitoring their own voices even as early as three have good, total quality and expression in their speech despite their hearing impairments," Mrs. Bajorek said.

Hearing music or words on records and tapes is another school experience for the toddlers. And, playing with the new toys at school is more

## At China Painters' Show

# Old Art Blooms Anew

A time-honored art enjoying a revival in the Detroit area will be on display this weekend when the Michigan Federation of China Painters holds a show and sale in the Troy Hilton Inn.

Observerland painters, members of the Birmingham and Northville Springs chapters of china painters, will join in the displays.

"China painting used to be

considered a major art and Detroit was one of its main centers," said Mrs. Doris Nofz of Livonia, president of the Birmingham chapter, secretary of the China Painters Guild and the state board of China Painters, and local teacher.

"In the last few years, it's been thought of more as a hobby. We want to make it an art again."

Mrs. Nofz, who has used

her fine brushes and oils and delicate touch to decorate six complete dinner sets and more separate china pieces than she can count, told about the history of china painting in this area.

Before World War I, she recounted, Detroit was the home of several old master china painters whose work had begun in Europe.

This began to change when

the war made transportation of fine porcelain difficult, and gradually many of the best painters began to realize they could find in California a longer season for growing the flowers and fruits they were portraying.

Close observation of nature is an essential for artistic china painting. Mrs. Nofz pointed out. She gets right down in the grass to see the flowers better.

"You look at a flower and swear you know everything there is to know about it—until you try to paint it," she said.

One of the masters of china painting who did keep his home in the Detroit area was George Leykauf, a native of Germany.

Successful as a painter and teacher, he sent for his 10-year-old niece to train her in the work.

Later a master china painter and teacher in her own right, Mrs. Emma Leykauf Begun became founder of the Guild of China Painters.

After World War II the china painting teachers in the Detroit area organized the Michigan Federation of China Painting Teachers. Organization of the national and international groups of teachers followed.

The Michigan group now numbers 489, many of whom will be on hand in Troy for the show and sale June 1 and 2.

Besides having their own plates, vases and other pieces on display for sale, members of the Birmingham chapter will be selling patterns to be traced onto china.

Most beginning painters use such patterns until they become experienced enough to sketch their own patterns.

The Birmingham chapter, so named because its organizing teacher has moved to that city, includes china painters from Farmington, Garden City and Westland as well as Livonia and Detroit.

Other officers include Mrs. Betty Runyan and Mrs. Paula Vogel of Livonia and Mrs. Thelma Lee Irwin of Detroit.

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SAMPLES of china painting for a show and sale in the Troy Hilton Inn Friday and Saturday are displayed by four Livonia members of the Michigan Federation of China Painters. From left, they are Bettie Runyan, Thelma Lee Irwin, Doris Nofz and Paula Vogel. (Observer photo by Bob Woodring)