

Helping Kids Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing Learn Language Better: The TALI Study

Lead Researcher: Dr. Deborah Mood

Study Number: 19-2717

Funding: National Institutes of Health

Dates: April 1, 2020 – March 31, 2025 (extended to March 31, 2026)

Colorado Team Members:

Deborah Mood, Jess Reidies, Lindsay Kendall, Amy Frisbie, Lisa Martin, Alyssa Kearney, and Kellie Sitarz

What is this study about?

This study looks at two ways to help kids who are deaf or hard of hearing (D/HH) improve their language skills. One way is regular speech therapy. The other way uses special tools to help with communication, called AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication). This second method is called the TALI program. The study is happening in Colorado and Cincinnati, Ohio, with over 150 kids taking part.

What have we learned so far?

We've finished signing up kids and are now collecting the last bits of data. In Colorado, 59 kids joined the study. So far, we've seen that kids who used the TALI program made bigger improvements in understanding and using language. Kids over age 5 also got better at social communication. TALI may also help kids who have trouble with things like focus and planning (called executive functioning).

Why does this matter?

Kids who are deaf or hard of hearing often have delays in learning language. These delays can affect how they do in school, make friends, and behave. There aren't many programs that really help with this. TALI is a new way to help these kids learn language by using their strong visual skills.

What's next?

We'll finish collecting and studying the data. Then we'll share what we learned with families and the community.

Want to learn more?

Email Dr. Deborah Mood: Deborah.Mood@cuanschutz.edu