

## BACKGROUND

When compared to deaf and hard of hearing children without developmental differences, children with developmental differences may require alternative tools to learn about their hearing aids. Audiologists have an important role in supporting patient's independent hearing aid use and selfadvocacy skills through providing developmentally appropriate education.

The goal of this project was to promote self-advocacy and independence for children with developmental delays. This was accomplished through the use of a social story about wearing and caring for hearing aids.

Aldabas (2019) states social stories:

- Help with social skills
- Teach particular skills
- Help adjust to change

#### **METHODS**

This social story was created based on the paradigm for social stories developed by Carol Gray (Gray, 2015). The social story provides developmentally appropriate information about wearing and caring for hearing aids and discusses the auditory benefits of hearing aid use. To reduce the risk of bullying, specific examples of how to talk about one's hearing loss and hearing aids are modeled (Spangler, C. L., & DeConde Johnson, C. (2017)).

This social story was created with the intention of collaboration between the patient and an adult and includes illustrations and developmentally appropriate language to make the materials more accessible to children with language and developmental delays. The story is created in an editable format to allow it to be individualized.

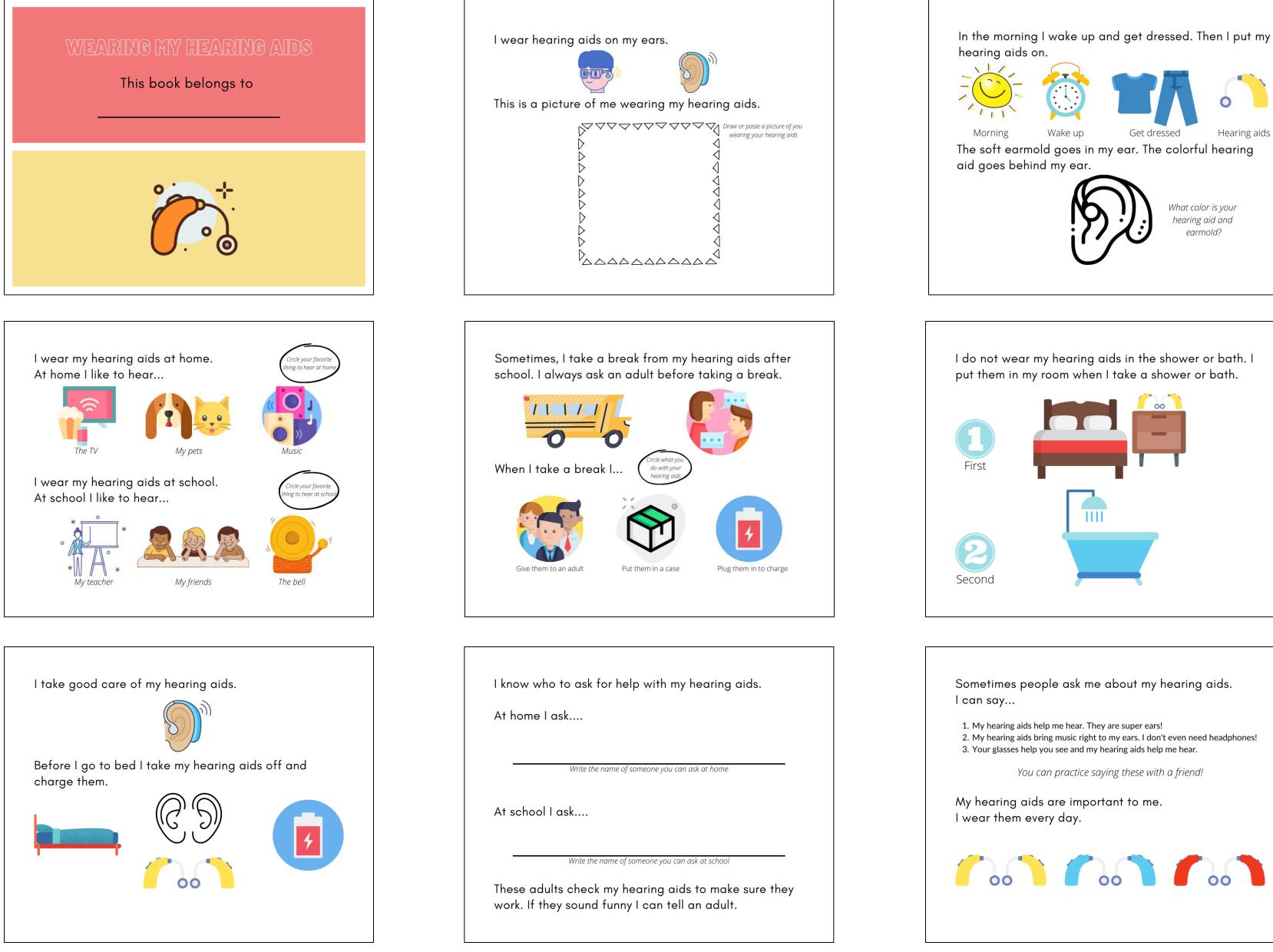
Development of this social story was supported by collaboration between the author, audiologists, and professionals with developmental disability expertise.

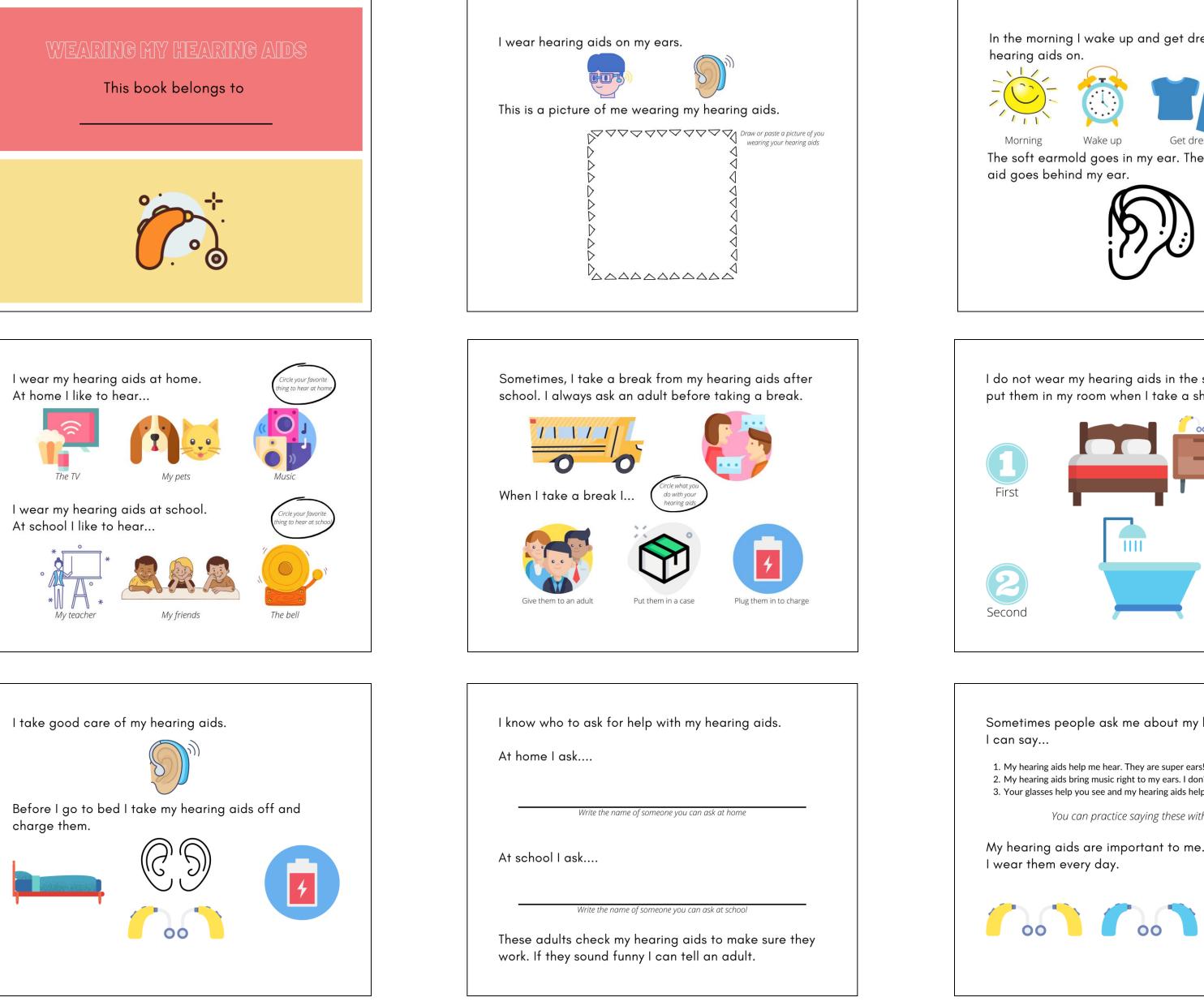
The social story includes the following sections:

- Hearing aid illustration
- Morning and nighttime routine
- Auditory benefits
- Taking a break, asking for help, and hearing aid care
- 5. Talking about hearing aids and hearing loss.



#### Example of a social story for a patient with rechargeable hearing aids.





# Social Story: Wearing My Hearing Aids

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# CONCLUSIONS

This social story was created in order to provide developmentally appropriate information about hearing loss and hearing aids to children with developmental differences. It is hypothesized that use of developmentally appropriate language and pictures supports will support children with developmental delays to take more responsibility for their hearing aids and to be better self advocates.

These materials will be publicly available for download on the Open Science Framework. Materials are customizable once downloaded. Additional research is needed to explore the efficacy of this social story in supporting hearing aid use and self-advocacy skills.

#### IMPLICATIONS

This social story provides introductory information about hearing loss and hearing aids. If future research supports the efficacy of this approach, similar social stories could be created around the following topics:

• Trouble shooting

Hearing aids

What color is your

hearing aid and

• Daily maintenance

## DISCLOSURES

This project was supported in part by Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities Audiology Supplement under Award T73MC11044 (awarded to PI: Sandra Friedman) from the Health Resources and Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

#### REFERENCES

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