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Hearing rehabilitation: History & current trends; Lehnhardt Akademie: PORA webinars for professionals

Before the advent of high quality hearing aids and specifically cochlear implants it was extremely difficult if not impossible for a deaf born child to acquire speech and spoken language. Not only very famous people thought that deaf people were also dumb and had no realistic chance to obtain a high educational level. Sign language was the obvious and often only option to communicate. Deaf born children became members of the deaf community, attended special schools and had limited possibilities in their professional life. In the late 80ies of the last century the scenario changed dramatically. Not only advanced technology made it happen but also our understanding that we are not hearing with our ears but with our brain. We learnt that early identification and early intervention are the basis for new habilitation methods like the auditory verbal approach. We also learnt that the involvement of parents is the decisive factor for success. They are responsible for the development of their child, the caregivers have a supportive function and this is mainly directed at the parents rather than at the child. The increasing accessibility to Internet in most parts of this world opens new dimensions. It facilitates communication, sharing of knowledge and experience between families and experts, but also amongst families and amongst experts. Geographical distance does not matter any longer. Exploiting this medium will further improve results of habilitation and pave the way for deaf children to be included in the world of hearing.

We will illustrate how the Lehnhardt Akademie utilizes Live Online rooms to offer webinars for professionals and parents, to meet global experts, listen to their presentations, provide access to the recordings in our weblog and organize forum discussions.