

Emerging Research Grants (ERG)

As one of the only funding sources available in hearing and balance science, HHF's ERG program is critical. Without our support, these scientists would not have the needed resources for innovative approaches toward preventing, researching, and finding better treatments for hearing and balance conditions.

Meet the Researcher



Amanda Griffin, Ph.D., Au.D.

Boston Children's Hospital

Griffin received both her Ph.D. and Au.D. from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. She is the director of audiology research at Boston Children's Hospital, where she specializes in cochlear implants, and an instructor in otolaryngology-head and neck surgery at Harvard Medical School. Griffin's 2024 Emerging Research Grant is generously funded by Royal Arch Research Assistance.

Although it is now more widely understood that children with unilateral hearing loss (in one ear) are at risk for challenges, many patients appear to adjust well without intervention. The range of options for audiological intervention for children with severe to profound single-sided deafness (SSD) has increased markedly in recent years, from no intervention beyond classroom accommodations all the way to cochlear implant (CI) surgery.

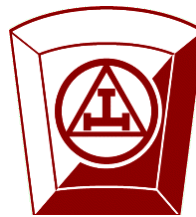
In the absence of clear data, current practice is based largely on the philosophy and convention at different institutions around the country. The long-term goal of the proposed work is to build evidence-based clinical guidelines for the management of children with SSD so that intervention decisions can be driven by empirical data, rather than where the children live and seek care.

This project will evaluate the validity of an expanded audiological and neuropsychological test battery in school-aged children with SSD. Performance on test measures will be compared across different subject groups: patients with typical hearing, unaided SSD, SSD and the use of a CROS (contralateral routing of signals) hearing aid, and SSD and the use of a cochlear implant. This research will enhance our basic understanding of auditory and non-auditory function in children with untreated and treated SSD, and begin the work needed to translate experimental measures into viable clinical protocols.

My early clinical experiences during my audiology externship at Boston Children's Hospital inspired my doctoral research project, and then all subsequent research, on children with SSD. The number of questions about how

to best care for this group was plentiful. I knew we could and had to do better for these patients and families. I was also motivated by the everyday challenges experienced as a clinician caring for children with SSD, specifically in lacking the tools and data to differentiate which children are in most need of and will benefit from audiological interventions. Working with children is something I've always wanted to do. If I had not been a researcher, I would have pursued a career as a teacher.

In my downtime I enjoy hiking and cycling with my sons and husband. And I am currently dusting off the cobwebs on my language brain and learning American Sign Language through Gallaudet University's ASL Connect Program—highly recommend it! —



Amanda Griffin, Ph.D., Au.D., is generously funded by Royal Arch Research Assistance. We thank them for their support of studies that will increase our understanding of the mechanisms, causes, diagnosis, and treatments of central auditory processing disorders.

We need your help funding the exciting work of hearing and balance scientists. Please consider donating today to Hearing Health Foundation to support groundbreaking research. Visit hhf.org/how-to-help.