



**HABILITAS**  
foundation



CAMPAIGN FOR A NEW  
**Pediatric  
Deaf and Hard-of-  
Hearing Department**

Giving children with auditory impairments  
a brighter future at the MAB-Mackay

**GOAL:**  
**\$300,000**



“When Alyah was younger, it was difficult to communicate with her.

Through our work with the MAB-Mackay and her improved access to sound, our daughter is now able to have real conversations and express herself as an individual.

She’s become a real go-getter and has more confidence in herself. As a parent, there is nothing more important.”

- Sebastien, father of 6-year old Alyah

*Thanks to the MAB-Mackay’s Deaf and Hard of Hearing Department, this special little girl and so many like her can overcome almost any obstacle that comes their way.*

# Every Child Deserves Access To Their World

For a parent, learning that your child is deaf or hard of hearing can be scary. Parents may be overwhelmed with feelings of confusion, disbelief, and grief – and have many questions about the future: how will they communicate with their child? Will their child’s development be affected?

For more than 150 years, the MAB-Mackay has supported families along this journey.

The centre offers a full range of services, including auditory training, speech-language pathology, music therapy, American Sign Language (ASL) training, psycho-social support, outfitting and service of assistive listening devices, and intensive cochlear implant rehabilitation.

Now that more hospitals are screening babies for hearing loss within hours of birth, the MAB-Mackay can begin intervention faster in order to support the development of the auditory brain center within the first months of life.

The cochlear implant program has also grown, with the recent addition of Montreal as a second site for surgeries in Quebec. The MAB-Mackay now supports more children, helping with the application process, the activation and programming of the technology, and the “intensive functional rehabilitation” period (through which the child’s brain is trained to associate meaning to a new form of sound).

Each year, more than 400 babies, children and young adults who are deaf or have auditory impairments are cared for at the centre, at no cost to the families.

**Our goal is to help children who are deaf and hard of hearing learn to listen and communicate, so they can reach their full potential in the world of sound.**



# A Wing of Their Very Own

Imagine if we could create an environment that is truly inviting and engaging for children who are deaf or hard of hearing. One that combines play and learning, and fosters an atmosphere where they feel safe and at home.

Many families arrive at this department at a stressful time. The therapies and evaluations that await their child involve a lot of concentration. In many cases, these therapies are intensive in nature and require repeat visits over several months as the team helps to mitigate brain changes caused by hearing loss.

All children, but especially those with hearing impairments, are intensely visual and rely on their physical surroundings for cues about what to expect and how to feel. Some children feel particularly stressed and anxious in settings that seem institutional, especially if they have had difficult medical experiences in the past.

A welcoming, child-friendly environment sets a tone of joy and wonder that primes the child's brain for learning before she ever sets foot in a therapy room.

**Our vision is to transform the pediatric auditory services wing from the current nondescript appearance into a warm, fun and immersive environment that the children can truly embrace. One that reflects the positivity, hope and opportunity that drive the therapy sessions.**



## This is Jack...

**Ever since Jack was diagnosed with bilateral moderate to severe hearing loss as a baby, reliable access to sound was essential to his ability to acquire language and develop normally. Without this important skill, his understanding of the world – and his future potential – would be hindered.**

“From a little baby boy to a little child, Jack is now ready to be integrated into a mainstream school in kindergarten (something we always dreamed of for him). The MAB-Mackay played a critical role in helping prepare and transform Jack for this milestone.

The team's determination to provide Jack access to sound (hearing aids, cochlear implants, countless audio tests and many SLP sessions) cannot go unnoticed.

From nearly 6 months old to now nearly six years old, MAB Mackay has been an extension of Jack's home. He's built a strong relationship with the team that ensures he hears well with the help of technology.

We can't thank the team enough and are eternally grateful for the help and services provided. “As Jack says today, *“I can hear better now.”*”

*Testimonial of Louis, proud father of five-year old Jack*



# Benefits

## Research has proven that patient-centred healing environments have considerable impact on treatment process and results.

The new design for the corridor incorporates interactive activity zones, new lighting, bright colours, sensory equipment, furniture, murals and artwork that follow a unifying theme, with natural properties that engage the imagination.

The new convivial atmosphere will significantly improve patient outcomes by reducing the anxiety of children and parents, and promoting their engagement in the process. With this welcoming, lively, and comforting atmosphere, children are more likely to view the facility as a fun place that is less threatening and be more willing to receive

treatment as a result. By integrating educational themes in the corridor, children will also benefit from learning opportunities from the moment they arrive in the waiting area until long after their therapy sessions have ended for the day.

In addition, it will promote staff pride, retention, and performance – factors that have a direct impact on quality of care. Overall, we are providing more children and families with an enhanced experience which will promote autonomy, dignity, functionality, and quality of life.

# Design Concepts

The project includes a complete renewal of the department, and includes many components that help to reinforce auditory and language skills:

- a brand **new waiting area**;
- three-dimensional **interactive activity murals** featuring animals, vehicles and objects for play and association with every-day sounds;
- **mural with American Sign Language alphabet** to encourage practice ;
- mural with visual **illustrations of range of speech sounds** needed to learn speech and language
- television screen with videos of sign language and other key messaging such as upcoming groups and community events
- mural outside audiology testing booth with drawings of children with cochlear implants and various hearing aids, to help normalize the use of assistive technology
- **comfortable and appropriate seating** for parents and children



“Many of our families are often just starting their journey of raising a child with hearing loss. They are often experiencing a multitude of feelings.

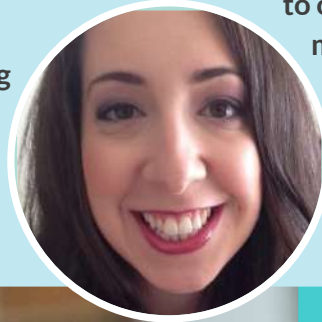
Other families may be further along their journey. For most, they will visit our centre often for close follow-up care and rehabilitation.

Regardless of which stage a family is in, having a warm, bright and welcoming pediatric

audiology department will allow us to provide these families with comfort during what are often stressful and overwhelming times.

These important renovations will be very well enjoyed and appreciated by all, from parents and older children, to our littlest clients who are just a few months old.”

- Tara Millman,  
Audiologist



You can help us make this transformative new environment a reality, and create a unique place of joy and discovery for so many children with disabilities.

The Habilitas Foundation, the official foundation of the MAB-Mackay, is championing this project that will give independence and quality of life to so many children who are Deaf or have auditory impairments.

Please show your support today.

For more information on how you can make a difference, visit us at

[habilitas.ca](https://habilitas.ca)