

Dean's Colloquium
Dr. Jessica Sullivan, Assistant Professor
Department of Communicative Sciences and Disorders



When: Wednesday, April 05, 2023

Where: Turner 129

Time: 3:00 – 3:20 pm, Q&A: 5 min

Title: Why Listening to Faces Matters

Abstract: Working memory is vital to a child's cognitive processing and speech understanding in noise. More recent findings suggest that the relationship between speech recognition in noise and auditory comprehension may be capturing difficulties in understanding speech in noise which have been linked to cognitive and linguistic skills. Children's auditory-cognitive performance is highly sensitive to processing load. The extent that children engage cognitive resources depends on demands of task difficulty and intensity level of four-talker babble. The combined costs of performing a difficult task in adverse acoustical conditions are greater than the sum of the individual costs. This suggest that the relationship between speech recognition in noise and auditory comprehension may be capturing difficulties in language which may have effects in academic success. Data will be presented (1) show that audibility alone does not account for difficulties in speech perception in noise (2) showing the complex relationship between working memory and auditory comprehension. (3) Implications for clinical speech in noise screener for children. While app-based interventions for speech and language exist, to our knowledge, none explicitly screen for perception of speech in the presence of noise.

Bio: Dr. Jessica Sullivan is the department chair and assistant professor in Communicative Sciences and Disorders at Hampton University. Her areas of interest include aural (re)habilitation, specifically, the development of innovative auditory training interventions. Dr. Sullivan has received numerous awards, honors, and grants including a SBIR from the NIH /NIDCD.