

JTC was founded in 1943 by Louise Treadwell Tracy, wife of actor Spencer Tracy. When the Tracys were told that their son John was deaf, Mrs. Tracy abandoned a promising career on the stage to help her son, and, in the process, became a trailblazer in the fields of deaf education and parental support. Mrs. Tracy founded JTC to share with other parents what she had learned, and named JTC in her son's honor. Today, JTC embraces the latest methods and technology to help deaf children communicate each day as we honor Louise's vision – that children with hearing loss will learn to listen and to speak.

This timeline illustrates JTC's history and important milestones in technology, education and innovation relating to hearing loss.

## 1887

**Alexander Graham Bell** founds the Volta Bureau, which focuses on speech development for the deaf. In 1945, Harriet Montague of the Volta Bureau becomes director of John Tracy Clinic's Correspondence Course. In 1956, the Volta Bureau is renamed the Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf. John Tracy Clinic becomes an early member.



## 1942

Louise Tracy's success with John and her growing expertise in spoken language for the deaf leads to the **founding of John Tracy Clinic**. The clinic begins as a discussion group among 13 parents.

## 1943

JTC becomes the **first institution on the West Coast** to develop a parent-centered, spoken-language curriculum for preschool-age deaf children.

JTC adapts its **Worldwide Correspondence Course** from materials provided by Wright Oral School. The course helps parents teach language to their deaf children.

Mothers with deaf children attend **JTC's first Summer School**.

JTC's **Preschool Program launches** with eight families.

## 1944

JTC adds **diagnostic hearing testing** and **developmental assessments**.

## 1949

The **Parent-Infant Program opens at JTC** as first of its kind in the nation.

## 1950s

Smaller transistor hearing aids begin replacing vacuum tube hearing aids.

## 1952

Louise Tracy advocates testing children's hearing at age 2 to 3 months.

## 1953

JTC and USC offer first **master's and credential program in special education with an emphasis on deaf and hard-of-hearing**. JTC's program begins a new partnership with the University of San Diego in 2005 and with Mount St. Mary's College in 2013. Program graduates 432 teachers by 2012.



## 1954

JTC's **Spanish translation of Correspondence Course** offered worldwide.

## 1960s

Introduction of auditory-verbal therapy enables some hard-of-hearing children to develop better speech. The method, aka listening and spoken language, becomes the standard when advances in technology allow profoundly deaf children more access to sound. Today, all teachers in JTC's Parent-Infant Program are certified in AVT.

## 1963

JTC begins offering **Community Hearing Screening Program** to preschools in Southern California.

## 1964

**Rubella pandemic** of 1964-65 results in dramatic increase in percentage of deaf children born to hearing parents. Many parents seek spoken-language option for their child, spurring demand for new technology and educational opportunity.



## 1965

Zenith introduces the **first practical, behind-the-ear hearing aid**.

JTC opens **Long Beach Center**, offering Parent-Infant Program.

## 1970s

**Invention of auditory brainstem response equipment**, which can confirm permanent hearing loss in infants as they sleep.

**Microprocessors** create foundation for **cochlear implants and digital hearing aids**.

Empirical studies support Mrs. Tracy's vision regarding the **impact of parents on children's language development**.

## 1892

John Dutton Wright founds Wright Oral School in New York City to **teach deaf children to speak**.

## 1919

Siemens invents the **audiometer** to test hearing.

## 1920s

**First wearable hearing aids** are tube amplifiers with microphones carried in the pocket.



John and Louise Tracy, circa 1940

## 1924

Spencer and Louise Tracy's first child, **John, is born profoundly deaf**. Louise begins traveling the U.S. to learn how to teach him to talk. Later, he attends Wright Oral School and California Institute of the Arts and becomes an artist for Disney Studios. He dies in 2007 at age 82.

## 1940s

**Audiology** becomes a profession during WWII.

**1972**

First national broadcast of a TV show with **closed captioning** on PBS series *The French Chef*.



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**1973**

Dr. William House of the House Ear Institute in Los Angeles introduces the **first widely used cochlear implant** for adults. JTC and House begin a medical and educational collaboration that continues today.

**1975**

Congress enacts Education of All Handicapped Children Act, the basis for **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act**, which requires that all children with disabilities receive free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment and with accommodations.

Daniel Ling develops the **Ling Six Sounds Test**, the six basic sounds needed for spoken language development. JTC teachers are early proponents of the test and still use it as a reliable guide and assessment tool.

**1977**

Adam Kissiah of NASA patents the **first multichannel cochlear implant**. In 1984, the FDA approves the hearing device for implanting in adults.



**1983**

**Louise Treadwell Tracy dies.** She goes down in history as one of the great innovators in the field of early childhood deaf education.

**1985**

JTC installs **FM system in preschool** to amplify the teacher's voice. Children wear receivers connected to their hearing aids.

**1986**

Mary McGinnis, then of House Ear Institute, co-founds **Network of Educators of Children with Cochlear Implants** to accommodate the growing number of children receiving cochlear implants prior to FDA approval for children in 1990. McGinnis joins JTC staff in 1995.

**1987**

**Digital hearing aids** are invented.

**1988**

Federal Commission on Education of the Deaf reports that the **average age of identification** for profoundly deaf children in U.S. is 2 ½ years.

**1991**

Federal Joint Committee on Infant Hearing recommends **all newborns be screened for hearing loss** before leaving hospital.



**1995**

JTC alumna Heather Whitestone becomes **first Miss America** with a disability.

**1997**

JTC renames **Correspondence Course** the Parent Distance Education Program and begins offering it online.

JTC staff are invited to serve on **California's Newborn Hearing Screening Program Task Force.**

**1998**

California's Newborn Hearing Screening initiative **becomes law.**

**2000**

JTC offers Parent Distance Education in **Spanish online.**

**2002**

12 families from eight countries enroll in **JTC's first Spanish-language Summer Session.**

**2004**

JTC installs **Soundfield FM systems** in the preschool for total classroom amplification.

JTC begins using **auditory brainstem response testing**, establishing the clinic as one of the top four institutions in Southern California for comprehensive pediatric hearing assessments.

**2005**

Researchers find that hearing screenings of newborns fail to detect 23% of children who develop permanent hearing loss by age 9 months, indicating **need for ongoing monitoring of children's hearing.**

**2007**

JTC's Baby Sound Check, a three-year pilot project, becomes the **first model program to train community-clinic medical personnel in pediatric hearing screening.**

**2008**

JTC introduces **dual language learning** to enable children from non-English-speaking homes to become bilingual, once thought to be impossible for deaf children.



**2012**

The average age of **detection of hearing loss in children** falls to 6 months.

John Tracy Clinic serves its **479,726th family since 1942.**