

Episode 71: Bailey's in her CF and Loving It! (Graduate Student Series)

During this week's episode of The Missing Link for SLPs podcast, we catch up with Bailee Jackson, who is now graduated from her program and loving her career in her first few months of her CF year! She shares what drew her to speech-language pathology, reflects on her early experiences with clients, and offers advice for undergraduate students.

Discussion & Reflection Questions

1. Tell us where you are in your academic career and why you became a speech pathologist.
2. What was it like getting into graduate school? Tell us about that journey.
3. How was interviewing for graduate school? What was that like?
4. How many schools did you get accepted to, and how long did you wait to hear back from them?
5. How did you decide which graduate program to go into?
6. Do you have any tips for starting your first year of grad school?
7. Do you have advice for working with your first client?
8. Tell us about a time things did not go well with a client and about a time when they did.

Quotes of the Conversation

"You just have to really follow your clients' lead and let them take you where they want to go and [do] what works best for them. And eventually, you just learn more about them. And it might be a little bumpy at first, but I think just kind of sitting back and trusting yourself, and realizing that you do know more than you probably think you do, can be really helpful."

-Bailee Jackson

Bailee Jackson

Speech Student and Clinical Fellow

My name is Bailee Jackson and I am now a CF for a school district in Minnesota! I completed both my graduate



and undergraduate degrees in the Communication Sciences and Disorders program at St. Cloud State University. With the help of a friend, I was introduced to the field of Speech Language Pathology near the end of my first year, and have been hooked ever since. During my time as an undergraduate I also competed on the St. Cloud State Women's Swim and Dive team and was heavily involved in the

University's NSSHLA chapter and MNSHA's Future Professionals Committee. These organizations both worked to connect students with similar passions both on campus and in other University programs across Minnesota. In my first year of graduate school, I have had the opportunity to work with both pediatric and adult clients in our University Clinic. Although, I am still unsure of what population I see myself working with in the future I do hope to work in the medical setting one day

Keep the Conversation Going

Thank you for listening to *The Missing Link for SLPs* podcast! **If you enjoyed the show, I'd love you to subscribe, rate it and leave a short review.** Also, please share an episode with a friend. Together we can raise awareness and help more SLPs find and connect those missing links to help them feel confident in their patient care every step of the way.

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[FreshSLP.com](#). Let's make those connections. You got this!

*Do you have a question you'd like answered on the show?
Interested in sharing your experience as an SLP with our audience?*

Send a message to Mattie@FreshSLP.com!

Not a substitute for a formal SLP education or medical advice for patients/caregivers



The Missing Link for SLPs Podcast Show Notes

Mattie Murrey

Hi everyone, and welcome to The Missing Link for SLPs podcast. I'm Mattie, and you're listening to an episode in our podcast series, "Oh the Places You Will Go: An SLP Spotlight," where I get to interview speech pathologists who have interesting positions in our field, from the very basic to the most interesting spots — places, people they work with, and all of that in between. I get to have the fun of just chatting with these SLPs, finding out what they do, how they got their jobs, and any words of advice they have for other SLPs. So, listen as we explore all the wonderful things an SLP can do.

Mattie Murrey

This is Bailee Jackson, graduate assistant from last semester. She was one of my saving graces, because coming in from the clinical field and moving over into the academic field, there were so many things I didn't know. And Bailee was the one who'd say, "I got this. I got this." So, I've invited Bailee on today for our series. She's the first one in the graduate sort stories. So welcome, Bailee. Glad you're here.

Bailee Jackson

Thank you so much for having me.

Mattie Murrey

You're a student. Tell us where you are in your academic career and why you became a speech pathologist.

Bailee Jackson

So, I will be heading into my second year of grad school. We're in our summer session right now. I chose to be an SLP... [It's] actually kind of a funny story. So, I initially came to college, and I wanted to be an eye doctor, which, to be honest, I'm not really sure why. But when I was little, I had an eye doctor who kind of played a big role in my life. And he caught something really early on that could have affected me later down the road if he wouldn't have caught it. So, in the back of my head, I knew that I wanted to maybe help people in that same way or play a role like that. And so, I did my first semester of chemistry and biology, and it just was not for me. And I was actually on the swim team as an undergrad, too. And so, there was an upperclassmen who had kind of taken me under her wing as I was transitioning into college. And she was in the major. And for one of her classes, she had to test people's hearing for a hearing measurement class. And she was like, "Bailee, you should come. Let me test your hearing." So, she brought me down there, and I got to see the clinic and the audiology suite. And she tested my hearing, and then on our way out, we ran into one of her favorite professors that she was pretty close with who isn't in the program anymore. But she was like, "Talk to her. You should do this program." And she kind of sat down with me just out of the blue and talked to me about it, and told me all



the different avenues I could go because I just really didn't know where I wanted to be. And I was like, "That sounds pretty good to me." So, I registered for those classes the next semester. And here we are.

Mattie Murrey

What was it like? So, you went to St. Cloud State as an undergraduate and then rolled over into the graduate program?

Bailee Jackson

Yep.

Mattie Murrey

Well, cool. I know, as a professor, when I teach undergraduates, I love it when they roll into our program because it's like, "Yay, I get to work with you longer [and] teach you some more." What was it like getting into grad school? Tell us about that journey.

Bailee Jackson

That is such an interesting process because I feel like it's this lurking thing at the end of an undergraduate's schooling career, where it's like grad school, grad school, grad school. And there's kind of a lot of pressure surrounding it, the whole application and interview process. I struggled with it, to be honest. It was really overwhelming for me, and just all the unknown involved with, "How am I going to do? Did I do enough during my undergrad to be good enough to get in where I want to get in?" And I really took some time — well, with the help of others, of course — to slow down and really take it step by step. So, that really helped. So, once I got kind of those big things done, like taking the GRE — that was kind of the first big step — and then asking for letters of rec and writing the personal statement, the rest was just kind of a tedious process of going through every school and making sure that it's a good fit for you. And then filling out the application. And kind of sitting back and waiting. That was the hard part, too. Once you send it, it's not in your control anymore. And that's something I struggle with. And so, it's a waiting game after that. But definitely with a lot of help, it ended up being okay.

Mattie Murrey

Do you remember maybe two months ago, when our undergrads in our program were just stressing out about waiting to hear, and I think it was you that started the words of encouragement? We just sent that tablet around to the grad students, and you guys wrote just the most true, authentic words of encouragement to the undergrads because you guys have been there. We'll have to put some of those in the show notes.

Bailee Jackson

Yeah. Cool. When I was reading through them from the other students, I was thinking, "If I would have read these in their shoes, that would have been so helpful." Because, yeah, it's just overwhelming. There's so much unknown. And sometimes it's nice to just have someone to tell you like, "It's going to be okay, whatever happens."



Mattie Murrey

Yeah, we'll make sure we get those available. How was it interviewing for grad school? What was that like?

Bailee Jackson

So, St. Cloud state was actually the only interview that I attended. None of the other schools that I applied for had an interview day. And it's intimidating. You know it's coming up in like two weeks, and you're getting ready. You're getting your outfit. And you show up, and there's a bunch of you — some people you know [and] some people you don't know. So yeah, it's intimidating. But I think once we got going, and we sat down, it wasn't quite as bad as I thought. Because they just ask you really genuine questions about why you want to be in the field you're in [and] what's helped you get to where you are. And so, I really tried to just talk how I normally would and not make it such a pressure-filled situation.

Mattie Murrey

Did you hear right away that you got in? How long did you have to wait?

Bailee Jackson

I think we waited about a week. And then they called us and let us know.

Mattie Murrey

Oh, they called you.

Bailee Jackson

Yeah, St. Cloud State called us. The other schools, since there was no interview, just sent us our result or our application, if we got accepted or not.

Mattie Murrey

So, you went through undergrad and you applied for grad school. Did you get accepted to more than one program?

Bailee Jackson

I did. I applied to seven schools and got into five of them.

Mattie Murrey

How did you decide? Because this is a question students will ask me: How do I decide which program to go into?

Bailee Jackson

Yeah. I actually waited until the very last day to decide because it was a really hard decision for me, too. I went and checked out some of the other programs, just to maybe meet some professors and see where I would be. But I always came back to the relationships that I had built at St. Cloud State. The professors in my undergrad were so great. And this is kind of a backstory, but in my undergrad, I actually had a time when I was definitely [in] kind of a lull



spot. And I was going to not only not be an SLP, but maybe not even keep going to school. And I was also a swimmer in my undergrad, too, so that was another layer of pressure that I was kind of feeling. And I wasn't sure if I wanted to keep doing that. And there was a professor that I was taking two of her classes. And, I always say this, but she was the one who kind of saved me in my school career and really made me want to be an SLP. The only time that I really was motivated and passionate about school was when I got to go to her class because I would hear stories and get to talk to her. And she would just inspire me, and I'd be like, "Wow, maybe I could be like her one day." And so, that played a really big role in me choosing St. Cloud State. Because I knew I had people like that in my corner, who would support me and help me continue to learn and grow. So, I just had to stick with my roots.

Mattie Murrey

I think when you make decisions that stay with your values and what's important to you, they resonate in the end.

Bailee Jackson

Yeah, for sure.

Mattie Murrey

And it's been fun watching you work your way through the program. It's been really fun. Tips for starting your first year?

Bailee Jackson

This is a really good question. I think one of the biggest things that I've gotten better at and that has helped so much is just leaning into the environment that you're in. Leaning in on your cohort because they are a great source of support. They're going through the exact same thing that you are. They're learning too, making mistakes, having good sessions [and] bad sessions, so that's really helpful. And then just leaning in on your professors as well. I love school. I have always said that. It sounds kind of nerdy, but I love it so much, just because it's a place where you can come and if you mess up, it's okay. You're supposed to learn from those, and you have people around you who can kind of pick you up and point you in the right direction. So, my biggest piece of advice would just be not to be afraid of messing up or making those mistakes. And making sure that you learn from them when you do.

Mattie Murrey

Good words of advice. How about words of advice for working with your very first client? Because in undergrad, you watched all the videos. And now you're stepping into the shoes of being a clinician.

Bailee Jackson

Yeah. That was honestly the hardest transition because, like you said, you sit and you watch and you learn through books and things like that, but you're not actually doing it. So, then all of a sudden, it's like, this client is sitting in front of you, and you're like, "Oh my goodness, how am I



going to do this?" I guess my best advice would be just be prepared. But don't be so stuck in that plan that you make where you can't be flexible to meet your client's needs. That's something I would do. I'd plan and I'd have this rigid [outline], like, "We're going to start with this, then we're going to move to this, this, and this." And it would never work. You just have to really follow your clients' lead and let them take you where they want to go and what works best for them. And eventually, you just learn more about them. And it might be a little bumpy at first, but I think just kind of sitting back and trusting yourself and realizing that you do know more than you probably think you do can be really helpful. One of our professors always says, "Know what you know and know what you don't know." And I think knowing what you know is sometimes hard for me because we have been through school for five years now. So, we do know a few things. So, trust it.

Mattie Murrey

Yeah. Excellent. And trust it and then relax. I've seen you just really step into learning to enjoy the sessions. You go in with your... This is me reflecting on you because I've supervised you. You have all your goals, your objectives, your materials. You've got everything ready. Your dash machine's ready to go. And it's been fun to watch you just get down on the floor and just relax and play and learn with focused play.

Bailee Jackson

Yeah. Yeah, it's not something that I did very well in the beginning. That's not really who I am. I like to have a plan. I like to stick with it. But everything just goes so much better when you just take a minute and be in the moment with the client.

Mattie Murrey

That being said, I asked you to come prepared with a story where things did not go well.

Bailee Jackson

Yes. So, one of my very first speech sound disorder pediatric clients... She's a little five year old. Tons of energy. Really, really fun. And I've been working with her for a while. And we were working on TH and L. And she loved to play games where she could be active and move around. So, we were playing a game called Feed the Weasel. So, she had to stand up and carry a little weasel food on a spoon and move around. And this is still early in the beginning. So, still kind of nervous, still kind of unsure. And, you know, her dad is watching from outside the window. I know my supervisor is watching me from the camera, along with the undergrads watching.

Mattie Murrey

No pressure.

Bailee Jackson

Yeah, no pressure at all. You know these eyes are there, but you can't see them. And she has the weasel food on the spoon, and it drops. And she starts cussing. And that's just not something you learn how to respond to, and especially when it catches you off guard. And I



never really had a client do that. So, it just caught me so off guard. And then I was like, "Oh my gosh, everyone's watching and I need to pull this back." And her dad is watching. And so, we just kind of worked through it and tried to redirect some of the words she was using. But that was a story that I definitely look back and laugh about now.

Mattie Murrey

That would not be a time where you would choose those frequently occurring words to work on.

Bailee Jackson

Yes.

Mattie Murrey

How about a story where something's gone really well?

Bailee Jackson

So, I think what comes to mind first is one of my stories with one of my aphasia clients. I had the chance to work with her both in group and individually. And one of the things that we were working on was just pushing her outside of her comfort zone. She had made a ton of progress over the past couple years with some other clinicians as well, but she still would say that she struggled going into new environments, going out to stores to shop, and having to talk to strangers. And so, one of the homework assignments that I came up with for her was to just do something that pushed her outside of her comfort zone. And she's the best. She's so motivated to work on it. And so, the next day, I heard the next session. So, the following week, she came down the hallway. And I could tell she was so excited because she was cruising down the hallway to come find me. And she saw me, and she was just so excited to tell me that, one, she had driven herself to session, which she hadn't been able to do before. And that was something that she said she was nervous to do, but she wanted to do it to push herself.

So, she was so excited to tell me that. And then she also had a bag with her. And so, she's like, "I have something to show you. I have something to show you." And we went into our clinic room, and she pulled it out. And she loves animals. She loves horses. And she pulled out this little gold trinket, like a little horse statue that could move. And she had gone to a store — an antique store — and walked in all by herself, and talked to the lady working at the front desk and asked her questions and had her help find something that she would like. And so, she brought it to show me. And then, after that, she shared it with the group. And the group all thought it was pretty cool, and I felt like they were pretty inspired. And yeah, that was just a really heartwarming story because I felt like I really did play a role in her doing that.

Mattie Murrey

I remember after that session, you came and sat in my office. And you just, you sat and then you sighed, and then you said, "The power of a therapist." That was a moment for you in your grad school where you just connected. It still gives me goosebumps. The things you can do, the



power of a therapist. I wrote a whole blog on that — just on that. Because I could just feel that heart moment for you.

Bailee Jackson

It's definitely a story that I come back to a lot, just with all that's going on and us doing teletherapy and being home from school. Just to kind of keep that in the back of my mind and keep it in my heart to be like, "Wow, that is still what we're working toward. And that's what we want to keep doing for people as we keep learning and growing." And definitely, that will be with me forever.

Mattie Murrey

Excellent. That's what makes a good therapist. In my opinion, it's somebody who's compassionate and feels that they can be effective doing what we do.

Bailee Jackson

Yeah. That's another thing that I think — sorry, this is kind of going all over the place — that working with you has helped me become more comfortable in that compassion. Because even if there are things that you don't know, or you don't know everything yet, with that at the center — the compassion for your clients and the care for them — I feel like you can really do anything.

Mattie Murrey

Yeah. And when people know we care, that makes a difference.

Bailee Jackson

Yeah, big time.

Mattie Murrey

So, we are going to have you back on. You've agreed to come back on, maybe in the fall. Definitely before you go off on your internship. When you're getting ready to study or take your praxis, we'll have a whole episode: Bailey's taking the praxis. And then I'll round into your clinical fellow.

Bailee Jackson

I'm excited.

Mattie Murrey

Yep, I'm excited. So thank you. Thank you for being on today.

