



Habilitation Outreach for
Professionals in Education

HOPE Note

Amount and Type of Therapy

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Determining appropriate therapy placements is a process that requires careful consideration of a number of factors. The following HOPE Note outlines some of the topics with weight in such decisions.

There is no one answer to the question, “How much therapy should a child with a cochlear implant receive?” Each child that receives an implant brings different auditory and speech skill levels to the table, regardless of age of implant or educational placement. Individualized programming is therefore key. As with any individualized plan, starting with assessment of the child’s skills and determination of his/her long-term goals will aid in answering this important question.

Immediate Post-implant Period

One observation that can be universally made is that children will need more intensive services in the early stages following implantation than they are likely to need later on. As it is in the initial months that critical auditory skill development begins, dedication to this process is crucial. An emphasis on meaningful auditory input will serve to “prime the auditory pump” and provide the basis for continued skill development. In some cases, revising academic expectations for the year may be appropriate to allow for intensive focus on auditory skill development and the growth of spoken language skills that are expected to follow. Even when auditory skills are considered to be a secondary goal to signed communication, concentrated,

early focus on the newly afforded auditory sense will assure maximum bonding to the cochlear implant and, in turn, greater benefit from the device. Of course the age of the child will dictate the practicality of length of individual sessions. Suffice it to say that new implant recipients should receive more time allocated to intervention activities than children who have used the device successfully over the years. In addition, progress in the development of auditory skills (i.e. rate of acquisition) should factor into the decision of how much and what type of therapy is necessary to continue to develop or maintain skills.

Designing Intervention

A model of integrated speech, language and auditory intervention is generally preferred over a separate but equal scheduling of speech therapy, listening practice and language development. Many school programs have made a commitment to children who receive cochlear implants by providing daily and integrated, individual speech, language and auditory therapy for the immediate post-implantation period. This is supplemented by carryover in the classroom by teachers who are knowledgeable of the intervention plan and believe themselves to be important members of the habilitation team.





Defining Professional Roles

Professionals with a variety of backgrounds might be called on to provide services for the child with hearing impairment: classroom teachers, speech language pathologists, teacher-consultants/itinerant teachers and educational audiologists. While each of these professionals has skills that will be valuable to the implanted child, it is incumbent on each to add to his/her knowledge of auditory skill development. Because auditory abilities form the base upon which language, speech and academic skills will be built, they should be incorporated into all classroom and therapy activities. A habilitative approach that addresses all of the child's learning goals will assist in determining the best "division of labor" with regard to one-on-one services.

Related Resources

Chute, P., & Nevins, M.E. (2006). *Building Collaborative Teams: Whose Job is it Anyway?* in *School Professionals Working with Children with Cochlear Implants*. San Diego: Plural Publishing.

Cochlear Americas. (2004). "Considerations at School" in *A Resource Guide for Teachers*. Englewood CO. To order, visit the HOPE Education and Rehab section of the Cochlear Online Store: www.cochlear.com/shop.

Garber, A.S., & Nevins, M.E. (2006). *Determining Therapy Needs*. HOPE Online Library. Available at www.cochlear.com/HOPE.

McClatchie, A., & Therres, M.K. (2003). "Educational Options and Support Services" in *AuSpLan: Auditory, Speech and Language: A Manual for Professionals Working with Children Who Have Cochlear Implants or Amplification*. Children's Hospital and Research Center at Oakland. Available at www.agbell.org.

Nevins, M.E., & Garber, A.S. (2005). *Push-In or Pull-Out: Models for One on One Services*. HOPE Online Library. Available at www.cochlear.com/HOPE.

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