



Habilitation Outreach for  
Professionals in Education

# HOPE Note

## Issues in Mainstreaming

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The decision to mainstream a child with a cochlear implant is a complex one that requires careful consideration of a number of factors, each of which contributes to mainstream success. The following HOPE Note outlines important child readiness factors, receiving school readiness factors and parent readiness factors that will require consideration to make a mainstream recommendation with confidence.

### Child Readiness

Historically, mainstreaming was reserved for children who, after a period of special education, had acquired sufficient skills to be successful in a general education setting. With implant technology now available to children as young as 12 months of age, the trend toward mainstreaming during the preschool years has been observed. Children who have demonstrated the potential to learn through listening are now being given the opportunity to continue to acquire skills in the mainstream rather than as a prerequisite to placement there. Regardless, consideration should be given to the child's language/concept ability when compared to his/her hearing age mates. Because the language demands of the classroom increase over time, a child must demonstrate language-learning ability that will sustain continued growth in the regular education setting. The child's speech perception and speech production

skills should be indicative of a spoken language system that allows the child to process and produce the classroom language. Finally, when the mainstream candidate demonstrates social skills that support social interaction with new hearing classmates, there is greater chance for successful placement.

### School Readiness

In addition to evaluating a child's readiness for the mainstream, it is also necessary to consider the receiving school's readiness for providing services to the child with a cochlear implant. Factors such as administrative support and a school community that values and accepts all students are as important as the more practical issues of room acoustics, availability of support services and willingness of staff to learn more about the needs of a child using implant technology.

### Parent Readiness

Parents should recognize that mainstream placement is yet another new beginning and not an end goal. Parents will need to accept the challenge of advocating for their child with an implant in the regular education environment.





The development of an IEP that specifies exactly the amount and types of services that will be provided to support the child is a responsibility that parents should be prepared to assume.

The exciting potential for deaf children with cochlear implants to achieve academic and social goals in the mainstream is available to many; however, it would be misleading to suggest that this accomplishment is possible for all children who receive a cochlear implant when other educational challenges are present. When mainstreaming is seen as an instructional and not a geographic decision, and when these factors are considered collectively we can be assured that children with implants will be appropriately placed in classrooms in which their fullest academic and social potential can be reached.

## Related Resources

DeConde-Johnson, C. (2006). *Gearing Up My Classroom: Strategies to Support a Student with a Cochlear Implant*. HOPE Online Library. Available at [www.cochlear.com/HOPE](http://www.cochlear.com/HOPE).

The Mainstream Center at Clarke School for the Deaf: [www.clarkeschool.org](http://www.clarkeschool.org).

Mainstream Tip series: Tips for Kids and Tips for Friends Moog Center for Deaf Education. Email: [publications@moogcenter.org](mailto:publications@moogcenter.org).

Mangiardi, A. (1993). *A Child with Hearing Impairment in Your Classroom? Don't Panic!* Washington DC: AG Bell Publications.

Nevins, M.E., & Garber, A.S. (2006). *Issues in Mainstreaming*. HOPE Online Library. Available at [www.cochlear.com/HOPE](http://www.cochlear.com/HOPE).

Otto, D., & Kozak, V. (1998). *Questions Teachers Ask: A Guide for the Mainstream Classroom Teacher with a Hearing-Impaired Student*. Washington DC: AG Bell Publications.

Sorkin, D.S. (2005). *Children and Cochlear Implants: What They Need at School*. AG Bell Online Seminar. Available at [www.cochlear.com/HOPE](http://www.cochlear.com/HOPE).

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