



# Tools for Schools™

Helping children with cochlear implants  
succeed in the classroom

Spring 2006 Issue 2

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Tools for Schools Web page.](#)

## Feature Story

### Cochlear Implant Centers Are From Mars, School Systems Are From Venus, and Parents Are From Jupiter: Improving the Communication Process

To maximize the success of children with cochlear implants, parents, school personnel, and implant audiologists must communicate effectively and work as a team. Communication between team members can often be a challenge. Sometimes it seems as if each team member is from a different planet! A lack of communication or miscommunication amongst implant audiologists, school personnel, and parents may negatively impact a child's outcome. Therefore, effective communication across the team is the key to maximizing performance with a cochlear implant. This issue's feature article reviews the role of each team member, provides general tips for improving communication, and offers suggestions for the specific information that should be shared among team members.

### Parents/Caretaker Role

Parents interact with all team members on a consistent basis. Therefore, parents should be the primary facilitator of communication among their child's team. Providing key information about a child's progress to all team members can be an overwhelming task. Below are guidelines to assist parents with this important responsibility.

#### Information to Share With Team Members

##### Expectations

It is important for parents to share what mode of communication they would like their child to use after cochlear implantation. A frank discussion about modes of communication will ensure that parents have realistic expectations for their child's performance and will assist the team in setting appropriate goals. Parents should also let team members know if they have concerns about how their child is performing with his/her cochlear implant. This will provide the team an opportunity to work together on problem solving and ensure that all members are aware of areas of concern.

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## Audiologic Information

- Program settings.** Parents need to inform school personnel about what program, volume, and sensitivity settings their child uses. Parents also need to let school personnel know if there is a certain program that should be used with an FM/ALD system.
- Upcoming appointments.** Parents should notify school personnel of any upcoming appointments their child has with the implant audiologist. This allows school personnel to provide the implant center with input about the child's progress and address any areas of concern.
- Test results.** It is also vital that parents keep all team members up to date on the child's audiologic profile. All team members should receive information about hearing and speech recognition test results. This information will assist professionals in setting appropriate expectations and may indicate why a child is not making expected progress.

## Outside Services

Finally, it is important for parents to share information about their child's performance in outside therapies, such as private aural rehabilitation. All team members should be aware of the goals set in outside therapies so they can provide feedback about the child's development of targeted skills.

## Parent Tip for Improving Communication

### Create a communication notebook

A communication notebook is a great way to facilitate sharing information. Include sections for the mainstream teacher, school speech-language pathologist, educational audiologist, cochlear implant team, and outside therapists. Each professional should contribute information about skill development, positive events, and areas that may need special attention. A section specifically for parents should be included so parents can communicate information and observations about their child's progress.

# School Personnel Role

Schools play an important role in helping children succeed with cochlear implants. School personnel are able to observe the child's performance on a consistent basis and often have access to information the implant audiologist and parents may not be aware of. For this reason, schools must share insights and concerns with all team members. The key pieces of information that should be shared with the child's team are discussed below.

## Information to Share With Team Members

### •Characteristics of the school's programs

Schools can help the child's team learn about their programs by providing information about the services their district offers for children with severe-to-profound hearing loss. Schools should share information about the classroom settings, communication modes, and support services available for children with cochlear implants.

### •Audiologic information

School personnel should report how consistently the child uses his/her device as well as what sound processor settings the child uses and if these settings are changed significantly during the day. Schools should also communicate if the child has difficulty hearing certain sounds or difficulty communicating in particular situations, as well as if sound ever appears to be too loud for the child.

### •Progress

It is important for all team members to have information on the child's academic and speech and language development. School personnel should inform team members if there is a sudden decrease in speech understanding or in speech clarity. Schools should also let team members know if the child is not making expected progress over time.

## School Tips for Improving Communication

### •Collect case history and background information

Successful communication starts with a clear understanding of each child's particular history and situation. It is important to collect information about the child's caretakers, hearing history, audiologic management, equipment, and any other services or therapies the child receives.

### •Appoint a liaison

It is helpful to identify one professional in your school or district who will act as a liaison with the cochlear implant center. This person should disseminate information from the implant center to the correct school professionals. A liaison who consistently corresponds with the implant team will have the opportunity to develop an ongoing relationship with the team that will improve overall communication.

### •Make sure release of information forms are signed and up to date

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and other laws prevent professionals from sharing information without a signed consent from the child's parent or caretaker. Make sure to keep blank release forms on hand.

### •Attend a programming session

This is a great way for school personnel to learn firsthand what happens when the child visits the implant center for a programming session. It also gives school professionals the chance to meet the child's implant audiologist.

## Cochlear Implant Center Role

The cochlear implant center will program the child's device so the child is able to hear sounds and speech. The implant audiologist should provide guidance on appropriate processor settings for various environments. The CI center regularly assesses the child's auditory skill development to verify programming. The implant audiologist is then able to identify if there are any programming issues that may contribute to a child's ability to hear and understand speech. For this reason, the implant audiologist should ensure that team members are aware of programming changes and/or equipment issues that may affect the child's overall performance.

**Advanced Bionics has several forms to assist with the communication process.**

•**Click here to view and download the Referral form.**

•**Click here to view and download the School Input form.**

## Technology Corner

### Using the System Sensor

The System Sensor is a handheld diagnostic tool for teachers and parents. It provides visual confirmation that the sound processor is communicating with the implant and that the sound processor power source is operating. It is a quick and easy test of system functionality.



#### To use

1. Begin by pressing the white button to obtain the battery status of the System Sensor.
  - An orange light indicates that the System Sensor is functioning appropriately.
  - The absence of an orange light indicates that the System Sensor's battery is depleted. A replacement System Sensor should be ordered.
2. Continue holding the white button while you move the Sensor over the child's headpiece. You may need to move the System Sensor around the headpiece area to find the optimal location for checking the functionality of the implant system.
  - A solid green light indicates the system is functioning appropriately.
  - A flashing green light indicates the processor is not communicating with the internal implant. You will need to complete troubleshooting.
  - The absence of a green light indicates that the speech processor power source is depleted. Change the battery and repeat the System Sensor check.

**To order the System Sensor, please contact our Customer Care Representatives at: (800) 678-2575 ext. 2010; TTY (800) 678-3575; or customerservice@advancedbionics.com. Part number: CI-5820; Price \$99.95**

# Resource Corner



# CARE™

Connections • Advocacy • Resources • Education  
Services and Programs for Your Hearing Life

**CARE** is Advanced Bionics' new family of unique, quality services and programs for cochlear implant recipients, their families, and professionals.

**CARE** stands for Connection, Advocacy, Resources, and Education. Read below to learn more about the **CARE** programs and services to assist parents, educators, therapists, and other professionals who work with children who have cochlear implants.

## Connections

**Need help providing information and materials to families considering a cochlear implant for their child?** The Bionic Ear Association (BEA) can connect parents of children who use a cochlear implant to parent's considering a cochlear implant for their child. The one-to-one correspondence and mentoring the BEA provides is a great way to learn about cochlear implants through the sharing of personal experiences.

## Advocacy

**Looking for information on consumer and professional advocacy organizations?** The BEA can provide you with information on local and national consumer organizations, conferences, workshops, support groups, and other civic-minded events and activities for individuals with hearing loss.

## Resources

**Are you a parent, educator, therapist, or other professional who needs immediate advice or guidance about how to use or troubleshoot cochlear implants?** The BEA and Tools for Schools Program provide on call experts to assist with advice and troubleshooting Monday through Friday from 5 AM to 5 PM PST.

**Do you need basic and concise information on troubleshooting cochlear implants? Are you looking for resource materials to assist you in managing children with cochlear implants in the classroom?** The Tools for Schools Program provides parents, educators, therapists, and others with valuable resources and information on issues related to children and cochlear implants.

**Do you want assistance ordering new equipment or replacing equipment? Do you have questions about insurance coverage or do you need to know if a product is under warranty?** Our Auditory Customer Care Service department is open 365 days per year with a live call center and Web response service and a Customer Care Policy committed to a 48-hour turnaround for replacement devices.

## Education

**Do you want to increase your knowledge about cochlear implants?** Advanced Bionics offers free Web courses, distributes free newsletters, and holds several workshops and seminars in different cities across North America every year.

## CARE Contact Information

BEA and/or On-call Experts:

Phone (800) 678-2575, ask for the BEA, or email [hear@advancedbionics.com](mailto:hear@advancedbionics.com).

To register for Advanced Bionics' Tools for Schools Program visit [www.BionicEar.com](http://www.BionicEar.com) or email [toolsforschools@advancedbionics.com](mailto:toolsforschools@advancedbionics.com).

To speak with one of our Auditory Customer Care Representatives, Phone (800) 678-2575 ext. 2010; TTY (800) 678-3575; or email [CustomerService@advancedbionics.com](mailto:CustomerService@advancedbionics.com).

To learn more about our seminars, workshops, Web courses, and newsletters, visit [www.BionicEar.com](http://www.BionicEar.com).

# Upcoming Education and Training Events

## SuperSize Your Cochlear Implant Knowledge and Skills

A two-day workshop. Day 1 covers cochlear implant candidacy, setting expectations, and hands-on troubleshooting experience. Day 2 focuses on aural rehabilitation techniques and activities.

## Rehabilitation for Children and Adults With Cochlear Implants

A two-day workshop. Day 1 focuses on auditory skill development in children. Day 2 covers adult aural rehabilitation topics and suggestions for home activities to improve listening.

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Date	Workshop	Location
Sept 28-29th	SuperSize Your Cochlear Implant Knowledge and Skills	Boston, Ma.
Oct 5-6th	SuperSize Your Cochlear Implant Knowledge and Skills	Toronto Canada
Oct 12-13th	Rehabilitation for Children and Adults With Cochlear Implants	San Francisco, Calif.
Oct 19-20th	SuperSize Your Cochlear Implant Knowledge and Skills	Atlanta, Ga.
Nov 9-10th	SuperSize Your Cochlear Implant Knowledge and Skills	Cincinnati, Ohio

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***Click here to register or learn more about our upcoming education and training events.***

## Upcoming Web Courses

Did you know that Advanced Bionics offers several live Web courses every month? A library of recorded courses on topics such as aural rehabilitation, troubleshooting, and assistive devices are also available. All Web courses are FREE and offer Continuing Education Units (CEUs). Check out some of our recent courses especially applicable for parents and school professionals:

Cochlear Implant Pre-hab: Establishing Listening and Language Skills Prior to Cochlear Implantation.  
Author Mary Koch

Getting Ready to Work With Infants and Toddlers With Cochlear Implants. Author Amy McConkey Robbins

Tips for Successful Communication Between Parents and School Professionals. Author Carissa Moeggenberg

Music and Cochlear Implants. Author Chris Barton

***Click here to register or learn more about our upcoming Web courses.***