

Help Your Child Listen and Learn With a Cochlear Implant

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Families who make the decision to have their child implanted have also made the decision to help that child hear as well as

possible. Receiving a cochlear implant is often the first step—but then what? Helping a child learn to make the best use of hearing is often referred to as aural rehabilitation. Your child is involved in aural rehabilitation activities at school or through your Birth-to-Three early intervention program by working with an audiologist, speech/language pathologist, and auditory-verbal or other therapist and/or educator. Studies have shown that although early intervention is an important factor in the development of language for children who are deaf (Yoshinaga-Itano et al. 1998; Moller 2000), another important factor is the level of family involvement (Moller 2000). For an aural rehabilitation program to be effective, family participation is essential.

Where do I start?

The first step is to “Think Auditory.” Although this may be a very different way of thinking, if you start looking for ways to incorporate listening into your child’s everyday life, it will soon become second nature. Sit beside your child as you read library books together. Take advantage of your child being turned away from you while playing with a toy. Use it as a time to talk about what your child is doing with the toy. For any routine language your child understands (e.g., Good morning. Are you ready to eat? Bye-bye, etc.), try saying it out of your child’s vision to encourage use of listening rather than visual cues.

Another important aspect is to be sure your child’s equipment is functioning and programmed well. The Ling Sounds (ah, oo, ee, sh, ss, mm) are a good tool to be sure your child hears well (Ling 1976, 1989). Your child should be able to hear and soon repeat each of these sounds when you say them at a normal volume from 6–10 feet away. Make listening for the Ling sounds part of your morning routine. Call your implant center if you think your child is not hearing well.

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Continued on page 2

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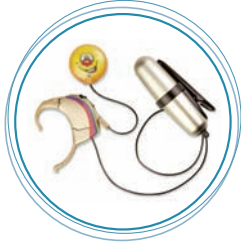
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Durable and simple to use, the Auria with PowerPak is a great option for children! Little 2 year old Will Tuggle just loves his bilateral Aurias!



I will put your shoes in the closet. There—your shoes are put away. This same idea can apply to other activities such as the laundry, fixing lunch, strolling to the park, or any activities you do while your child is nearby.

For older children, provide the opportunity to use hearing first. This may be as simple as calling your child's name three times before gaining his/her attention visually. Ask questions without providing any visual cues such as, *Do you want orange juice or apple juice?* If your child doesn't understand after you have repeated the question, provide other cues as you repeat the question a third time (e.g., point to the juice bottles, use signs/cues, or hold up a juice glass). You may be surprised by what your child can understand through hearing alone, if not immediately, then over time.

We spend so much time on homework, is there any way to incorporate listening into homework time?

There are a variety of ways to help your child listen while also helping with homework.



- Review vocabulary or spelling words: you say them (your child is listening only, not watching you), your child repeats the word and gives you the definition, uses it in a sentence, or finds it on the page. If this is difficult, let your child know that you will say one of two words from the homework (e.g., insect or ant). This will make the listening task easier. If you need to make the task more difficult, have your child listen as you say the definition then your child can find the word from the homework page.
- If reading text is part of your child's homework, take turns reading aloud. Sit side-by-side so you are both looking at the book. This will also give you a chance to discuss the text.

HINT: If your child gives you a wrong word or answer during these activities, be sure to check and see if it is because your child didn't hear what you were saying or because the material is difficult.

How do I know what to do? I don't want to do it incorrectly.

- Relax—you can't go too far wrong if you just look for opportunities throughout the day to talk with your child.
- Ask your child's therapist(s) and/or teacher(s) for ideas you can work on at home.
- Observe therapy. You will learn new techniques and have a better idea of what your child is working on in therapy.
- Check out the AG Bell website (agbell.org). There are a number of excellent materials for parents that can be used with any communication mode.

What else should I keep in mind?

- Avoid testing your child. Instead model the listening behavior you would like to see from your child. For example, *Listen, I hear something. I think I hear Daddy coming home. Or, Could you repeat that please. I'm not sure I heard you correctly.*
- If you do any structured listening activities, be sure to make them fun and provide positive reinforcement
- Pay attention to the environment. If your child seems to hear worse at certain times than others, it might be because there is more background noise.
- Use a normal conversational level. If you have gotten into the habit of dropping your voice or talking loudly, work to get yourself back to talking in a more natural way with your child.

As you work with your child, therapists, and CI program, you will gradually become more confident in what to expect from your child and how to help him/her become an effective listener.

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When new vocabulary or spelling words are introduced, take a minute to say the words aloud while your child listens and repeats the words. This helps develop auditory memory for these words.

For an infant or toddler, talk-talk-talk. Talk about what you are doing. If you are changing your child's clothes, narrate the experience. *Let's take off your shoes.* Click the shoes together to help your child know you are talking about shoes. *I like these new shoes, but it's time to take them off. Here let's take off the right shoe.* Take it off. *Now let's take off the left shoe.* Take it off too. *We took off your shoes.*

References:

1. Yoshinaga-Itano C, Sedey AL, Coulter BA, Mehl AL. Language of early- and later-identified children with hearing loss. *Pediatrics*. 1998;102:1168-1171.
2. Moeller MP. Early intervention and language development in children who are deaf and hard of hearing. *Pediatrics*. 2000;106:E43.
3. Ling D. *Speech and the Hearing Impaired Child*. Washington, DC: Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf. 1976,
4. Ling D. *Foundations of Spoken Language for Hearing Impaired Children*. Washington, DC: Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf. 1989.

AG Bell Rehab Web Links:

Parents' page: http://www.agbell.org/DesktopDefault.aspx?p=For_Parents&linkid=2

Bookstore page: <http://www.agbell.org/DesktopDefault.aspx?p=Bookstore>

Teen page: <http://www.hearourvoices.org/DesktopDefault.aspx>

About the Author

Ruth Reeder has been working with children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing and their families for over 30 years and has been in the field of cochlear implants since the late 1980s. She received her Bachelor's degree in Deaf Education from Illinois State University and her Master's degree in Educational Audiology from the University of Illinois. As an educator, Ruth taught children with varied degrees of hearing loss and ages, including infants and preschoolers. As an audiologist, Ruth has provided services for pediatric and adult cochlear implant recipients in both school environments and clinical settings. In addition to supporting families of implanted children, she has extensive experience consulting with educators and developing rehabilitative plans for school and home. She has presented at local, state, and national meetings on topics of cochlear implantation.

Currently, Ruth is involved in applied research and clinical studies at Washington University, St. Louis, Mo., a program with a long-standing history in cochlear implant research and clinical care.

Considering a Cochlear Implant?



Accepting and enduring severe/profound hearing loss can be a difficult experience. Understanding the technology and process of cochlear implantation can make the experience feel overwhelming. The professionals and volunteers of the Bionic Ear Association are here to help.

If you or someone you know have questions about cochlear implants, would like to learn more about the technology and its benefits, or would like to be connected to individuals and families that are using cochlear implants, contact the audiologists at the Bionic Ear Association. We can help you think through your own individual situation to find the solution that works best for you. Write to us at hear@advancedbionics.com, or call **(800) 678-2575** and ask for the BEA.

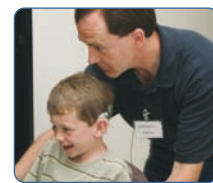
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With an independent power supply, the iConnect is designed to provide reliable FM access without compromising regular power consumption.

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To order the iConnect, contact Advanced Bionics Customer Service at customerservice@advancedbionics.com or 800-678-2575.

The Phonak MicroLink FM system may be available for school use through your child's school district or can be purchased through your audiologist. For more information on the MicroLink system, see www.phonak.com.

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— From a parent of a 10-year old girl

Could You Benefit From Aural Rehabilitation Therapy?



Edie Gibson of the Bionic Ear Association asks

Kathy Newbern, MEd, CCC-SLP, Cert AVT, of the Children's Healthcare of Atlanta about the effectiveness of rehabilitation exercises.

Learning to hear with a cochlear implant is a complicated process. Aural rehabilitation, structured exercise to facilitate learning to hear, can be an effective method of improving listening skills. To find out more about how cochlear implant users can benefit from aural rehabilitation, I sat down with university instructor, licensed speech-language pathologist, certified Auditory Verbal Therapist, and mom, Kathy Newbern.

BEA: I usually think of aural rehabilitation therapy as something for children. Can older children, teens and adults benefit from therapy with a professional?

Kathy: Sure! Even if you have had your implant for several years, if you are interested in learning more and are motivated to practice, then you could benefit from meeting with a therapist. For users who have reached a plateau in their skill development, aural rehabilitation can be a great way to continue to build skills. Therapy may also help if you have a specific goal in mind such as listening in noise, improving your speech production, using the telephone, or practicing use of assistive listening devices.

BEA: Sounds like anyone could potentially benefit. How often do you have to go for therapy to be effective?

Kathy: Children learning to listen, comprehend, and use spoken language should receive structured therapy on a regular basis, as determined by the cochlear implant team. However, teens and adults may benefit from less frequent visits. They may visit a therapist once a week to work on a specific skill or they might meet monthly to chart their progress, establish new listening goals, and get specific exercises to work on at home. Some cochlear implant users might arrange to share an appointment with another user or to have the therapist come to their support group.

BEA: If I wanted to find a professional therapist in my area, where would I search?

Kathy: You could begin by asking people you know locally such as your audiologist, other cochlear implant users, or school personnel to recommend a therapist with experience in helping people with hearing loss to improve their listening skills. Your state licensure board and the American Speech Language Hearing Association (ASHA) have listings of licensed and certified speech/language pathologists and audiologists. You could also check the websites and publications of Auditory Verbal International (www.auditory-verbal.org), and the AG Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (www.agbell.org).

BEA: What if someone is unable to locate or attend aural rehabilitation therapy with a professional? Are there things they can do at home to practice listening?

Kathy: For children developing spoken language and speech, it's very important to have the guidance of an experienced professional, such as an auditory-verbal therapist, speech-language pathologist, audiologist, or teacher of the deaf. Though cochlear implant users who already have a language base may benefit from working with a therapist, there are many ways they can practice listening on their own. One of the most important things a cochlear implant user can do is enlist the help of others. A parent, spouse, best friend, sibling, son, or daughter could help provide support and give feedback. Doing this takes advantage of daily communication opportunities, because you talk with them every day. One of the earliest things for them to do is to point out sounds in the environment and help identify them. As the listener becomes more experienced, their communication partner can help to confirm what they heard.

BEA: What about the times when you don't have another person close by?

Kathy: Listening on your own can also be a great exercise. As you go through your daily routine, be aware and try to locate the source of the sounds around you such as the telephone and doorbell ringing, birds singing, water running, as well as the television and radio. You may be surprised how often you hear a new sound that is part of your daily routine!

BEA: In addition to mastering sounds in the environment, how can one focus on enhancing understanding of speech?

Kathy: Enhancing your listening skills comes through lots of practice, and there are a variety of ways to do this. First, remember that you can listen throughout your day, everyday, in both structured and informal ways. Pay attention to expressions that those around you use most often, such as greetings, social questions, and activity-related language. You'll find that there are expressions that are said over and over within your day-to-day routine. At first, you may be relying on your lip reading skills, but

will find that, with practice, you should understand more through listening. Daily practice with your communication partners will help you see more rapid results. If sign language is your primary way of communicating, it can help to have your communication partners begin by using speech and sign simultaneously, then only speaking during your practice sessions. When using the closed captioning option on your television, keep the sound on as well. If you have a computer, websites that have sound and text are great ways for children and adults to practice. A popular method for older children and adults is through the use of audio books. (See sidebars for websites for listening practice and suggestions for using audio books). It can be fun to practice with another CI or hearing aid user, so ask your audiologist, therapist, educators, and people with hearing loss if there are other adults or children who would like to get together and practice listening.

BEA: Progress and experiences can change so rapidly. How can a person keep track of it all?

Kathy: Keeping a detailed listening journal is a wonderful way to provide feedback for yourself, your therapist, and your audiologist, and to track listening progress and milestones. For parents, a journal can be an invaluable tool for keeping track of their child's auditory, speech, and language development.

BEA: What an easy technique to keep track of how far you or your child has come and what challenges are next to work on. Your thoughts, Kathy, on meeting with a professional therapist, doing listening activities on your own or with others, and keeping a journal are excellent suggestions for improving listening skills. Thanks so much for sharing your time and ideas!

For more information or to find a therapist:

AG Bell Association www.agbell.org

American Speech Hearing and Language Association:
www.asha.org/findpro/

Auditory Verbal International:
www.auditory-verbal.org/AVTLocator.asp

Suggestions for Using Audio Books

- Start with children's audio books from the library that are accompanied by text, or try using Leap Frog reading products. Listen to the tape or CD and follow along in the book. As skills improve, listen to unabridged novels while following in the book. This task is more challenging because the vocabulary is more complex and the rate of speech may be faster.
- Ask a friend or family member to help by reading to you or making a recording using a rate you are comfortable with. Initially, follow along with the book. If you practice listening to the same passages, you may find that you will be able to follow without reading along. You may enjoy listening to your favorite book while in the car or going to bed. The more you hear it, the more you will understand it!
- Read aloud to yourself or alternate reading pages with another person. This can help you learn to monitor your own voice and speech while improving listening and reading skills.
- Gradually begin to listen to sentences or paragraphs without reading along. Repeat as often as necessary for you to understand what is said.
- Read ahead a paragraph or two, then listen to it without looking at the book.

Sample Listening Journal Entries

- New sounds you hear or your child responds to.
- Meaningful events such as the first time you heard someone call from another room, heard a clerk in a store, ordered from a drive through, understood accented speech, or followed along in a group conversation.
- Sounds you are able to or have difficulty differentiating. For example, does a voice sound different than non-speech, such as a dog barking? Does a male voice sound different from a female voice? Does your son sound different than your husband?
- New words you or your child understands (make sure to include details such as who the speaker was, what the context was, and what kind of environment you were in (i.e., quiet or noisy)).
- Progress on home listening, language, and speech activities.
- Under what circumstances you changed programs on the speech processor, why, and how did it change what you heard.
- Questions you have for your therapist, audiologist, or surgeon.
- Listening situations that are difficult and suggestions you receive for making those situations better the next time.
- Accomplishments such as your child placing the headpiece on her head when it had fallen off, making new sounds, and saying new words or phrases or changing the batteries herself.
- How much lip reading you feel that you are doing and how this might change with familiar speakers and situations as you are listening and understanding more.
- When you used Assistive Listening Devices and how they helped.
- How music sounds. Make sure to include details about the type of music and whether it was on the car radio, home stereo, at a concert, etc.



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NEW AURIA CARRYING CASE



All Auria processor users will be receiving the new Auria Carrying Case, a complimentary gift from Advanced Bionics! The customized Auria Carrying Case is a multi-functional case that can carry all your basic Auria components. It holds an Auria processor with either battery or huggie attachment and any earhook. There is a place for the headpiece that attracts the headpiece magnet and compartments to hold the AA PowerPak or other accessories and earhooks. The Auria Carrying Case contains a removeable insert that also serves as a Dri-Aid kit so you can remove any excess moisture as you store it at night.

CIAF Kick off

November marks the official kickoff for the Cochlear Implant Awareness Foundation (CIAF), a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing information, resources and support to cochlear implant recipients and their families.



Founder Michelle Tjelmeland knows firsthand the challenges faced by families who have been impacted by hearing loss. Both Michelle and her seven-year-old daughter Ellie are implant recipients.

According to Michelle, "Every family's journey to hearing will be unique. Yet, there is much we can learn from each other and from the hearing care industry. CIAF pools that collective experience so that families can make informed decisions, while never feeling completely alone."



CIAF offers a financial assistance program for families experiencing hardship due to cochlear implant costs. The program is not intended to cover the medical procedure itself, but rather to assist with costs that are not traditionally covered by insurance (hotel or other travel expenses, childcare during hospital stays, etc.) or expenses that have exceeded the limits of healthcare coverage.

Foundation programs are made possible through the sale of awareness wristbands and the generosity of caring individuals and organizations.

For more information regarding CIAF's programs or to learn how you can support the organization's work, please visit their website at www.ciafonline.org.

The Sound of Dreams



The Dallas Hearing Foundation knows that the sound of dreams is priceless. That's why this nonprofit foundation is dedicated to treatment, education, and research for the hearing impaired. Board of Directors President Dr. Robert Peters with the tireless Melissa Benton, Debbie Spicer, and numerous Foundation volunteers made their annual family picnic and silent auction a fun, successful event for all involved. Every one of the four hundred-plus donated auction items was sold, raising over \$20,000 to benefit children and adults in need of hearing equipment and medical or rehabilitative services. The highlight of the day, particularly for the many children in attendance, was dunking the doctor (or audiologist or speech pathologist) at the popular dunk tank! Thanks to the dedication of so many people supporting organizations like this one, medical care and hearing technologies, such as cochlear implants and hearing aids, can be extended to all regardless of financial means. To learn more about the Dallas Hearing Foundation, visit their website at www.dallashearingfoundation.org, or call (972) 644-3277.

Young cochlear implant user Ryan Dake, his mother, Cindy (R), and Elaine Leander, Advanced Bionics' South Central Regional Manager, enjoy the day at the Dallas Hearing Foundation family picnic on September 17, 2005.

Pride of the Cochlear Implant Community

Cochlear implantation is a life-changing event for many people in so many ways. For some, these personal experiences take them on an unexpected journey of giving—to the hearing impaired community and the community at large. Most of these efforts go highly appreciated, but are not formally recognized. On rare occasions, individuals are credited by their peers through formal acknowledgement of their generosity and accomplishments. Please join me in congratulating cochlear implant users **Brian Farrell** and **Susan Boswell** in receiving their respective awards for bringing awareness and sensitivity regarding hearing loss and cochlear implants to wide-reaching audiences!

To submit recipients of awards or present special recognition to individuals providing community service in relation to their or their child's use of a cochlear implant, please forward a description to hear@advancedbionics.com with a subject heading of "Bionic Beat submission."

Hall of Fame Inductee Brian Farrell and his trusty hearing dog, Darcy.

Brian Farrell, CII Bionic Ear user from Brooklyn Park, Minn., was inducted into the Alumni Hall of Fame at the Minneapolis Community and Technical College in May 2005. Brian was recognized for his tireless work with the deaf and hard of hearing. He has donated hundreds of hours speaking at numerous clubs and events, mentoring individuals, and serving on committees advocating for those with hearing loss and cochlear implants. This is not his first award; He has been applauded for his generous volunteerism in past years through the AG Bell Foundation, Oticon Focus on People, *Twin Cities Business Magazine*, and the local Courage Center. Fabulous accomplishments, Brian!



Journalism Award Winner Susan Boswell

Susan Boswell, resident of Jessup Md., is an associate editor/writer for *The ASHA Leader*, the newsmagazine of the American-Speech-Language-Hearing Association. She received a bronze award for a story she wrote about her cochlear implant experience, "The Gift: Cochlear Implant Brings a Year of Change." The award was bestowed by the Society of National Association Publications (www.snaponline.org), which recognizes excellence in association publications. Congratulations Susan!

The story can be found at:

www.asha.org/about/publications/leader-online/archives/2004/040217/f040217b.htm.

What's In a Blog?

A web log, or blog as they are popularly called, is basically an online ongoing journal. Many cochlear implant (CI) recipients are using blogs to express themselves and communicate their experiences with the world of sound through a cochlear implant. Check out these blogs from some CI recipients, and share the links with others who want to learn more about the CI journey from the perspective that counts the most— individuals and families engaged in the cochlear implant experience.



The Markert Family

Follow the trials and triumphs of a family with two children using cochlear implants.

www.bionicboys.blogspot.com



Kristin Pagliuca

As a young professional beginning her career, Kristin strives for independence by hearing with a cochlear implant.

<http://kpcochlearimplant.blogspot.com/>



Sheila Adams

After an adult onset gradual hearing loss progression affects her emotionally and vocationally, Sheila receives a cochlear implant and reconnects with the world of sound.

<http://sheila777.blogspot.com>

Advanced Bionics does not endorse or attest to the accuracy of any information included in these blogs or websites.



BEA Insider

Advanced Bionics' commitment to cochlear implant candidates and recipients has facilitated continued growth in BEA staff and services to you and your family. BEA members (register at www.BionicEar.com) receive personal notifications of all the BEA activities, and keep an eye on the Consumer Events Calendar at www.bionicear.com/support/getconnected/events.asp.

Summertime was jam-packed with BEA events!

- The BEA joined hundreds of hard of hearing and deaf individuals and their families coming together for conferences of several national consumer organizations and state chapters. We hope to see you at these conferences in 2006!
- Audiologists from the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) worked with the BEA conducting a dynamic workshop where cochlear implant users learned about home therapy and assistive technology resources to maximize performance. Look for more of these workshops and online classes in 2006!
- The BEA Summer Seminar Series took us to 18 cities educating consumers about the wonders of cochlear implant technology. We are excited to continue the Seminar Series in 2006!



Cochlear implant recipients Susan Mitloff (L) and Catherine Garland helped many people learn about cochlear implants at the SHHH National Convention.



(L-R) Deb Hollingsworth, Debbie Bottles, and Julie Stephens enjoy the sounds of music through their cochlear implant as they dance with BEA staff member Edie Gibson, at the infamous karaoke party at ALDAcon 2005.

National Conferences in 2006

CHHA 2006:

June 1-4
Charlottetown, PEI
www.chha.ca

AG Bell 2006:

June 23-27
Pittsburgh, Pa.
www.agbell.org

SHHH 2006:

June 29- July 2
Orlando, Fla.
www.shhh.org

NAD 2006:

June 29-July 3
Palm Desert, Calif.
www.nad.org

ALDA 2006:

October 18-22
St. Louis, Mo.
www.ald.org

BEA's Newest Staff Members

Susan Greco, MS

Director of Marketing Communications, Auditory

We are happy to announce Susan M. Greco as the new Director of Marketing Communications, Auditory. Sue brings a wealth of relevant experience to Advanced Bionics, after having been the Executive Director of Deafness Research Foundation (DRF) and Director of Strategic and Professional Alliances with Sonomax Hearing Healthcare. Her whole career was in marketing, communications, public affairs and government relations and communications. She'll act as Director of the BEA in addition to managing all North American and international marketing communications efforts.

Tina Childress, MA, CCC-A

BEA Consumer Services Specialist

Tina has extensive background in the provision of support services for children and adults as an Educational Audiologist in the public school system and visiting audiology lecturer at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, where she graduated with her Master's degree in Audiology in 1998. She is fluent in English, ASL, and Spanish. Being late-deafened as an adult, Tina knows firsthand the experience of rapid onset deafness and regaining hearing through cochlear implantation in September 2000. Through her role in the BEA, Tina provides personalized support and educational programs to help individuals and families navigate the cochlear implant journey.

A Message from Teresa Dozier

As BEA Manager since May 2003, I have thoroughly enjoyed developing programs that support you and your families. Recently I had to make the tough decision to decrease my time dedicated to work to provide the daily support needed by my three stepchildren. I'm thrilled that my new role as part-time consultant to the BEA enables me to continue my contributions to these programs and services. Please keep in touch!

BEA Consumer Contacts:

Bionic Ear Association

800-678-2575; ask for the BEA!
Hear@advancedbionics.com
www.BionicEar.com

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