

# HOPE TIPS

## Time for School!

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# HOPE TIPS

## Time for School!

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These **HOPE Tips** and other materials on the habilitation and educational needs of children with hearing loss are available in the HOPE area of the Cochlear Americas website at [www.cochlear.com/HOPE](http://www.cochlear.com/HOPE)

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## ASSESSMENTS AND IEPs

Whether your child has just begun his school career or has several years of instruction under her belt, maintaining perspective on the ins and outs of the education system can be overwhelming. The Time for School series is designed to ease the stress of that journey by providing guidance for key areas of the education process.

For your child with a cochlear implant, skills assessment is a never-ending process: one that begins with an initial evaluation to determine your child's baseline level of functioning in a given area and continues at regular intervals in order to document progress over time. Evaluations will play a role in determining your child's eligibility for special education services, guiding instruction and planning habilitation efforts. These points are then recorded and monitored through the Individualized Education Plan. For clarification of the process, consider the following:

### ASSESSMENT

Each year, your child's progress in each area of skill development must be monitored in order to determine the best approach for continuing momentum or improving the rate of progress. The approach to completing this assessment varies by school district; however, these constants should remain:

- A comprehensive evaluation should be completed on at least an annual basis and by all professionals who work with your child.

- Evaluations should include objective assessments to compare your child to others of his or her age, grade and/or hearing profile. These might include achievement tests and assessments in content areas for classroom teachers and tests of speech, language and auditory development for individual service providers.
- Recorded observations of your child in and out of the classroom and therapy setting are also critical to creating a complete picture of his or her skills. Social skills and emotional maturation should be considered as a part of this observational data.
- Test scores and other information from outside agencies will round out the yearly assessment. For example, your child's cochlear implant center can be an important resource for providing a functional hearing assessment or device specific information.
- By comparing previous results to current data points, inferences can be made about the nature of your child's development and progress.
- Make sure that you receive and review all assessment results. If you don't understand the purpose of a test or its results, get clarification.

### INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN

Information gathered for the yearly assessment provides the foundation for the discussion and goal setting of the Individualized Education Plan. Points to consider with regards to writing the IEP:

- IEPs must include a description of the child/statement of current level of function, measurable goals for the coming or current year, a description of the classroom placement(s) and additional services that will be provided to meet these goals, and a description of the methods and timeline for evaluating the current IEP.
- The annual IEP meeting would ideally be held at year's end in order to utilize yearly assessment results for goal setting and to plan for the following year. Realize, however, that you may ask for an IEP at any time if something has changed or if you feel that your child's current plan is not meeting his or her needs.
- The IEP team includes you and all of the professionals that work with or will work with your child.
- Ask for and receive a copy of the draft IEP document before the meeting so that you can properly prepare. As noted above, review all assessment results prior to this meeting and ask for clarification as necessary.

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- A productive approach to generating a truly personalized plan would begin with discussion of the goals that are to be achieved in the school year. Once goals to be targeted have been agreed upon, discussion can follow as to what services and strategies might appropriately be put in place to help your child work towards achieving those goals.
  - Other considerations that may be incorporated into the IEP include:
    - Recommendations for classroom acoustics, related services, provisions for participation in the mainstream, and assessment modifications.
    - Guidelines for parent involvement.
    - Provisions for professional development to ensure that your child's team members have current information on cochlear implants and/or appropriate strategies for habilitation.
  - You may take time to consider the statements that have been recorded in the IEP document; it is not required that you sign the form on the day of the meeting.
  - Make sure that all elements of the IEP are in writing. Items discussed but not included in the document are not part of the IEP and will not be part of the assessment process. Once signed, this document becomes the official record of goals and services to be provided, therefore make sure that it is complete and comprehensive before giving your signature.
- While navigating the waters of the Individualized Education Plan may be overwhelming for you as a parent, recognizing that comprehensive assessment results are the underpinnings of the process may make it more transparent. For other resources related to participating in IEPs, parents can access [www.listen-up.org](http://www.listen-up.org) or [www.wrightslaw.com](http://www.wrightslaw.com) for specifics on special education law. Other outside resources to consider include:
- Tucker, BP (1997). IDEA Advocacy for Children Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing: A Question and Answer Book for Parents and Professionals. Baltimore, MD: Singular Publishing.
  - Downloadable articles on IDEA and the IEP process from Hands and Voices, available at <http://www.handsandvoices.org/resources/guides.htm>

### RELATED HOPE RESOURCES

HOPE Online Learning Modules "Serving Children at School" and "Mainstreaming" available at [www.cochlear.com/HOPE](http://www.cochlear.com/HOPE)  
Examples of pertinent courses include:

Garber, A & Nevins, ME (2006). Assessment for the Child with a Cochlear Implant. Audiology Online archived session. HOPE Online Library. Available at [www.cochlear.com/HOPE](http://www.cochlear.com/HOPE)

Nevins, ME & Garber, A (2007). HOPE for Next Year: IEP Goals & Reports. Audiology Online archived session. HOPE Online Library. Available at [www.cochlear.com/HOPE](http://www.cochlear.com/HOPE)

HOPE Note: Assessment Measures. Available at [www.cochlear.com/HOPE](http://www.cochlear.com/HOPE)

HOPE Note: Amount and Type of Therapy. Available at [www.cochlear.com/HOPE](http://www.cochlear.com/HOPE)

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### MOVING INTO THE MAINSTREAM

With so many children now receiving cochlear implants immediately following their first birthday, the likelihood of their enrolling in their neighborhood school for preschool or kindergarten increases dramatically. When your child with a cochlear implant is ready to receive educational services in the mainstream, you will need to address a number of important considerations so that he or she can have the best possible experience there.

Even children presenting with age appropriate language skills at the time of enrollment will need careful monitoring to oversee the continued vocabulary and language learning that will be necessary to support academic proficiency in later years. Parents should request the services of speech and hearing professionals as a protective measure during the primary years when academic demands increase with each successive year. Consider the need for the following support services:

- A teacher of deaf/hard of hearing children
- A certified speech language pathologist
- A reading specialist
- An educational interpreter (sign language, Cued Speech or oral interpreter if the child utilizes visual support)

In general, however, it is the classroom teacher who will be the key player in your child's mainstream success. Teachers who are "mainstream ready" will be those who are considered expert managers and instructors; it is in classrooms that are well run that children with implants have the greatest opportunity for true integration.

Teachers who have not previously had a child with a cochlear implant in their classroom may be particularly interested in seeking more information about providing quality instruction to children with hearing loss. As the one who knows your child best, you can take steps to set the stage for success in the mainstream by pointing educators in the right direction. Following are some resources of particular merit for introduction to your child's classroom teacher:

- The Mainstream Tips Series from the Moog Center contains two booklets, one "for kids" and one "for friends," that are designed to prepare students and those in their support network for the experience of being/having a child with a cochlear implant in the classroom. These booklets are available for purchase through the bookstore at [www.moogcenter.org](http://www.moogcenter.org)
- The HOPE Online Library of seminars ([www.cochlear.com/HOPE](http://www.cochlear.com/HOPE)) offers easy access to information about the unique needs and abilities of children with hearing loss using cochlear implants. Courses in the "Serving Children at School" and "Mainstreaming" modules are particularly pertinent.
- The Mainstream Center at Clarke School provides a newsletter, audio taped materials and annual conferences relating to children with

hearing loss learning in mainstream classrooms. Information on these resources is available at [www.clarkeschool.org](http://www.clarkeschool.org)

Utilizing guidance from the above sources, reflect thoroughly on your child's needs in a general education environment when writing the IEP for that placement. Specific areas for consideration include access to instructional media through captioning, access to assemblies and other school activities through FM technology and the need for educational support services. Once your child has begun participation in the mainstream, continued assessment of that placement will be critical. Communicate with your child's teacher about the importance of monitoring the following areas as the school year progresses:

- Knowledge of routines and transitions
- Ability to follow directions
- Comprehension of classroom instruction
- Observation of his/her responses when faced with instruction or conversational breakdown
- Interactions with peers
- Ability to fully access instructional material provided by way of songs, videos and other multi-media avenues

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Difficulties in any of the above areas may warrant adjustment of your child's educational plan to include additional supports.

Good communication with all school personnel is an important element of success in the mainstream. Finding the right balance between sufficient genuine interest and overbearing hovering can be a challenge; as a parent, you are encouraged to build a harmonious relationship that encourages the school to do its best to meet your child's needs without feeling overburdened. When educational programs have the opportunity and the resources to prepare rather than simply react, the outcome will be more positive for your child.

### RELATED HOPE RESOURCES

Cochlear Implant Resource Guide: Meeting Children's Needs at School. To order these materials visit the HOPE, Education and Rehab section of the Online Store: [www.Cochlear.com/Shop](http://www.Cochlear.com/Shop)

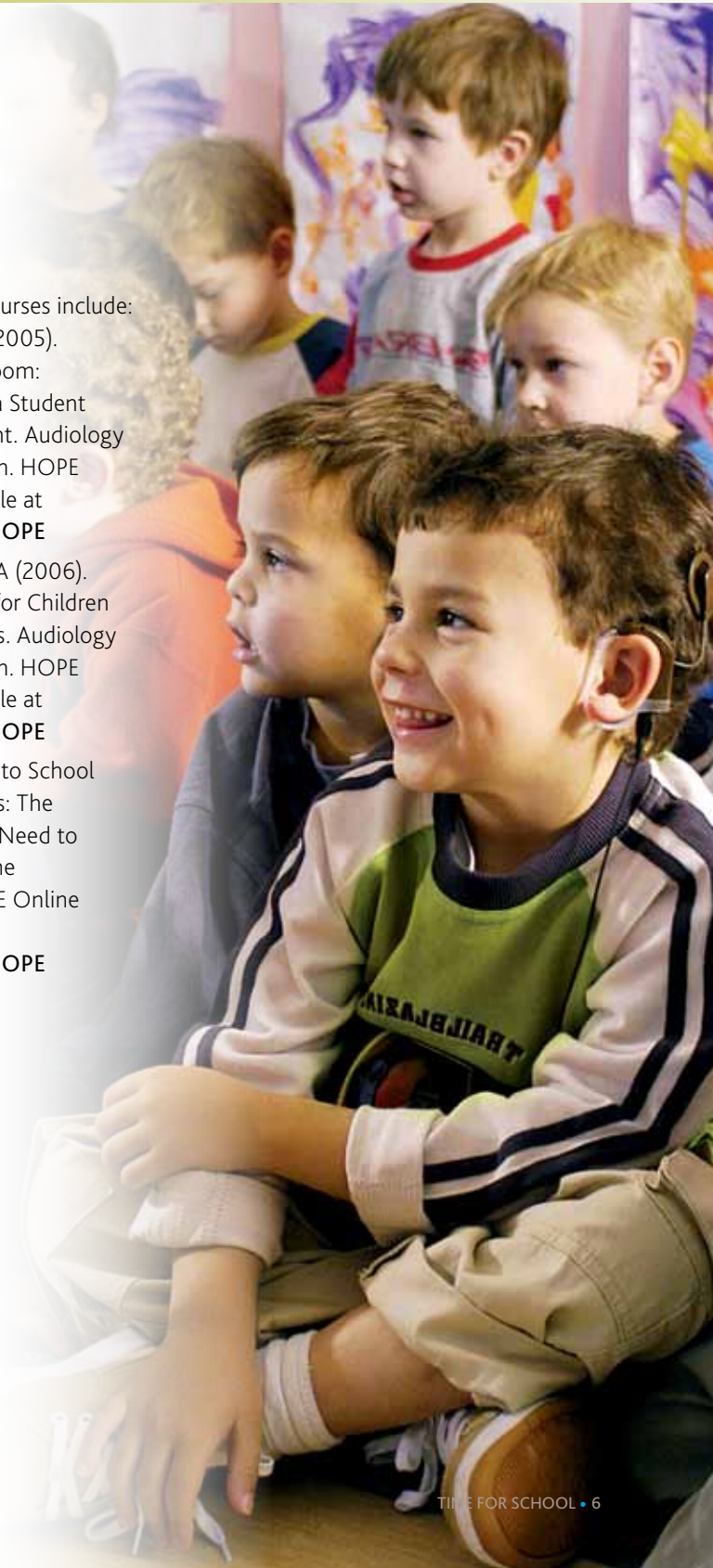
Educator's Guide to Cochlear Implants. Available at [www.cochlearamericas.com/Support/2156.asp](http://www.cochlearamericas.com/Support/2156.asp)

HOPE Note: Issues in Mainstreaming. Available at [www.cochlear.com/HOPE](http://www.cochlear.com/HOPE)

HOPE Online Learning Modules "Serving Children at School" and "Mainstreaming" available at [www.cochlear.com/HOPE](http://www.cochlear.com/HOPE)

Examples of pertinent courses include:

- DeConde Johnson, C (2005). Gearing Up My Classroom: Strategies to Support a Student with a Cochlear Implant. Audiology Online archived session. HOPE Online Library. Available at [www.cochlear.com/HOPE](http://www.cochlear.com/HOPE)
- Nevins, ME & Garber, A (2006). Mainstreaming Issues for Children with Cochlear Implants. Audiology Online archived session. HOPE Online Library. Available at [www.cochlear.com/HOPE](http://www.cochlear.com/HOPE)
- Sorkin, D (2007). Back to School with Cochlear Implants: The Top 10 Things Parents Need to Know. Audiology Online archived session. HOPE Online Library. Available at [www.cochlear.com/HOPE](http://www.cochlear.com/HOPE)



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### TIPS FOR TEACHERS

The auditory access provided by a cochlear implant allows deaf children to acquire the language and academic skills that make them good candidates for education in the mainstream. Certainly, best educational practices apply to these students, but a few additional suggestions are offered here to share with teachers in the mainstream.

The auditory access provided by a cochlear implant allows deaf children to acquire the language and academic skills that make them good candidates for education in the mainstream. Certainly, best educational practices apply to these students, but a few additional suggestions are offered here to share with teachers in the mainstream.

- Establish a genuine and personal relationship with the child with an implant. Be sure to engage the child and go beyond the smile.
- Don't be afraid of the child's cochlear implant equipment. Determine what role you may play in the management of the device at school.
- Understand and use additional classroom amplification equipment.
- Consider a buddy system (for all children in the classroom) to provide a learning partner in school as well as an after school, homework resource. Be sure that the child with the implant has a responsible buddy.
- Establish high, but realistic expectations for the child with an implant. Make modifications as performance warrants.
- Make sure that directions are clear; asking children to restate directions is a good way for the child with an implant to check his/her understanding.

- Use visual supports to complement presentations whenever possible. Pictures, charts and the writing of key vocabulary on the board will be of benefit to all children in the classroom but especially the child with an implant.
- Be aware of the fact that questions on tests that use complex language may be particularly challenging for a child with an implant and may negatively influence the assessment of content knowledge.
- Establish routines and follow them consistently; recurring patterns in schedules and activities will assist the child with an implant in attending to the language of those routines.

In addition to the classroom teacher, the child with an implant will also access instruction from the physical education teacher, the art teacher, and perhaps even the music teacher. Teachers of all special subjects might consider providing parents and speech/language providers with vocabulary lists of terms particular to their instruction for pre-teaching as necessary. Subject specific recommendations include:

- For the PE teacher,
  - Understanding that the acoustics of the school gymnasium will create a challenging listening condition for the child. Be sure to keep the child with an

implant in close range when giving instructions and to give instructions before game play has begun.

- Recognizing that the complexity of rules of organized games may be misunderstood by the child with an implant. Providing a written copy of rules will be useful for parents (or the itinerant teacher or speech language pathologist) to review to ensure that the child understands how a particular game is played.
- For the Art teacher,
  - Making sure that the child in art class has an opportunity to look and listen; it is sometimes difficult for a child to watch the product of art while at the same time be instructed on the step by step procedures for creating it.
  - Having individual conversations with a child about his/her artwork as he/she circulates. The more the teacher knows about what the child is capable of understanding, the more likely it is that meaningful communication exchanges can take place.
- For the chorus or band teacher,
  - Recognizing the important role that rhythm and melody play in the fluent production of spoken language.



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- Using consistent language to alert the musicians/singers to the direction: “Trumpets, on my count”, etc.
- Enlisting the support of speech and hearing professionals in helping the child with the pronunciation of unfamiliar word, or in getting the timing of a choral piece just right.

As a final note, when participating in the mainstream environment, a child's complete access to sound in all activities (specials, assemblies, field trips) is paramount. The mainstream teacher has a particular role in working together with school and cochlear implant audiologists to alert them to a child's need for FM technology in situations specific to their classrooms.

Adapted in part from Chute & Nevins, (2006). *School Professionals Working with Children with Cochlear Implants*, Plural Publishing.

### RELATED HOPE RESOURCES

HOPE Note: Issues in Mainstreaming. Available at [www.cochlear.com/HOPE](http://www.cochlear.com/HOPE)

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- Nevins, ME & Garber, A (2006). *Mainstreaming Issues for Children with Cochlear Implants*. Audiology Online archived session. HOPE Online Library. Available at [www.cochlear.com/HOPE](http://www.cochlear.com/HOPE)
- Sorkin, D (2007). *Back to School with Cochlear Implants: The Top 10 Things Parents Need to Know*. Audiology Online archived session. HOPE Online Library. Available at [www.cochlear.com/HOPE](http://www.cochlear.com/HOPE)



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## HOMWORK HELP

As a child with a cochlear implant grows older, educational demands increase with every passing year. Teachers will expect the child to extend the learning initiated during the school day by completing homework assignments. As the primary facilitators of homework tasks, parents can benefit from practical suggestions for helping their children be successful in this essential learning task.

Perhaps the most important thing that you can do as a parent to help your child develop good study habits is show that you believe homework time to be an important and worthwhile activity. You can do this by:

- Providing a quiet and well lit place to do homework.
- Setting a regular time for homework everyday.
- Ensuring that your child has the necessary materials to complete assignments including paper, pencils or pens and books.

Talking with your child's classroom teacher at the start of each school year should help to define the teacher's expectations for homework and your role at home. Among the kinds of questions you may want to ask your child's teacher are:

- How much time should be devoted to homework every night?
- Should I check whether or not answers are correct?
- What should I do if my child can't complete the assigned homework?

General guidelines as to amount of homework that is appropriate suggest that, in the early grades, grades K-2, when the purpose of homework is to develop good study habits necessary for later learning, children can benefit from

10-20 minutes of homework each night. In third through sixth grades during which completing homework is believed to contribute to school success, it is reasonable to expect that the child will spend 30 to 60 minutes per night completing homework assignments. When a child reaches seventh grade, time designated to homework varies day by day as long term assignments may require scheduling over a period of weeks in addition to nightly study. These time recommendations do not include free reading, which is strongly encouraged at every level (Dept of Ed. 2005).

For some children with cochlear implants, homework time may involve pre-teaching of concepts and language that will be encountered later in the school week. In many cases this exposure to new vocabulary or unfamiliar concepts can be approached in a spontaneous way, while at other times, structured work may be required to meet pre-teaching needs. If your child requires this additional assistance to maintain pace with the demands of the classroom, consider:

- Setting a schedule with your child's teacher to share his or her lesson plans for upcoming topics. Each teacher prepares differently and will prefer to approach this task accordingly (e.g. at the beginning of each week or on a monthly basis).
- Requesting in your child's IEP that textbooks be sent home on a daily basis or that an extra set of books is made available to your family.
- Meeting occasionally with teachers of special subjects (e.g. gym, music and art) to generate a list of new vocabulary that might be used in these classes or to learn of songs and games that you can practice at home.
- Finding additional sources for worksheets that address target concepts so that schoolwork is not duplicated, but rather supplemented, by your work at home.

Whether work at home is for pre-teaching of concepts or dedicated to the homework assignments made in class, it will be important to monitor your child's success in completing assigned work. Take note of how much help your child needs to complete work, how quickly he or she is finishing and how comfortable he or she feels with the results. This information will assist you in working with your child's teacher to use homework time optimally and to have a great school year, every year.

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Adapted in part from: US Department of Education, Office of Communication and Outreach (2005). Helping Your Child with Homework. Washington DC. Available at: <http://www.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/homework/index.html>

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- Sorkin, D (2007) Back to School with Cochlear Implants: The Top 10 Things Parents Need to Know. Audiology Online archived session. HOPE Online Library. Available at [www.cochlear.com/HOPE](http://www.cochlear.com/HOPE)



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## We believe.

At Cochlear,<sup>™</sup> we believe in the joy of sound. We believe that our purpose is to bring the sounds of life to the ears of those who cannot hear by providing the tools and confidence they need to explore the world around them. Our passionate dedication to providing the best hearing performance and most reliable technology has enabled our implant systems to deliver the miracle of sound to over 140,000 individuals around the world. And we promise to continue this tradition, giving you the best possible sound. *For life.*



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Hear now. And always

