

**APPENDIX C****ACCOMMODATIONS: EDUCATIONAL ACCESS**

*Please refer to Appendix F for glossary definitions.*

Students with cochlear implants, similar to all students who are deaf or hard of hearing, can be expected to access the curriculum and achieve academically on par with their classmates when appropriate educational supports are provided. The strategies listed in this appendix are designed to facilitate or improve access regardless of the mode or language utilized. Strategies are to be based on the individual needs of the student and monitored as they may change over time.

**ANNUAL IN-SERVICE TRAINING**

In order to build a foundation of understanding among the teaching team working with the student, the provision of in-service training is recommended. This in-service training can be provided by a professional with expertise in working with children with cochlear implants in school settings. The training is recommended at least annually and should be repeated whenever the student transitions to a new grade or a new team of service providers. Topics to be addressed may include:

- the proper use and care of the cochlear implant processor(s), hearing aid (if used), and FM/infrared listening system (if used);
- the role and purpose of an interpreter, transliterator, or note-taking device (if used) in the classroom;
- a discussion of the effects of the student's language, communication, learning, and social skills; and
- a discussion of the recommended strategies to support the documented accommodations or modifications that will ensure the student's access to language and communication.

**CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS**

Classroom observations done several times throughout the school year by the teacher of the deaf, the educational audiologist, or the speech-language pathologist who is experienced in working with children who are deaf or hard of hearing are recommended to gain a clear understanding of how the student is accessing education and what accommodations or modifications are most effective.

Observations are recommended in all settings (e.g., academic classroom, special subject areas such as art and gym, auditorium, cafeteria), followed by consultation with the teaching staff to implement appropriate accommodations or modifications for ensuring communication access in each setting.

**STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SETTINGS**

Educational planning team members should use the following strategies to enhance classroom learning:

- previewing and reviewing content vocabulary and concepts. As with all other students in the class, spot-check the student with a cochlear implant for comprehension of instruction by asking for repetition or an explanation of what has been discussed, describe what the class will do next, or explain the meaning of a word or concept in a natural manner.
- providing the parent or appropriate school specialist (e.g., speech-language pathologist, teacher of the deaf) with prior access to key vocabulary to prime and prepare the student.

- repeating and rephrasing questions and comments from any secondary speaker or contributor to classroom instruction and discussion.
- allowing additional processing time for the student to receive, comprehend, and respond to information presented in spoken language.
- maintaining a natural rate of speaking, articulation, and loudness level while adding additional pauses to allow for processing.
- placing the student in a group with one or two other children in a quiet setting away from competing background noise when breaking up into small groups for class projects.
- using a pass-around microphone not only for the teacher but also for the students in the class and instituting a one-voice rule (i.e., only one person is allowed to speak at a time).
- signaling or cueing the entire class to listen before instructions or directions are given.

### **COMPREHENSION AND CLARIFICATION STRATEGIES**

Educational planning team members should consider the following strategies to enhance comprehension and clarification:

- asking questions of the student with a cochlear implant as the teacher would for all students in the class.
- encouraging the student to request repetition or clarification to ensure comprehension.
- repeating questions and comments from the student’s classmates as well as announcements made over the public address system.

### **ACROSS-SCHOOL SETTINGS AND INTERACTIONS**

Educational planning team members should consider the following strategies to enhance success across all school settings:

- training all specialty area teachers (e.g., art, physical education, music) in how to ensure access to communication, particularly for challenging communication environments.
- creating a plan for access to emergency information (e.g., lock-down, fire drill).
- ensuring appropriate access to assemblies and performances. This includes previews of content, a transcript or script, preferential seating, provision of an interpreter, instruction regarding use of an FM system for the presenter, post-teaching, and summarizing what was presented (especially if there is a link to content).

### **ENHANCING SELF-ADVOCACY SKILLS\***

*(\*See Appendix E: Self-Advocacy Skills for more information.)*

Educational planning team members should consider the following strategies for fostering self-advocacy skills:

- providing the student with an opportunity to tour the school and meet the staff prior to the start of the school year so that the student can anticipate navigating the school space, ask questions of staff, and more comfortably assume responsibility appropriate for the student’s age and grade level.
- teaching the student the type of questions to ask when there is a need for clarification (e.g., “Could you repeat that? I don’t understand because I missed that last word.”) and training staff to notice

the indicators of misunderstanding and confusion.

- using neutral and positive language to describe and refer to the student while avoiding such words as “impairment,” “disorder,” and “disabled.”
- creating small group opportunities (e.g., lunch bunch) in order to support the student in developing social connections with peers (e.g., learning names, discovering shared interests).
- collaborating with the student’s counselor (preferably a counselor who has experience working with children who are deaf or hard of hearing).
- identifying the student’s needs and developing strategies coordinated with a social skills curriculum.
- encouraging the student to be involved in extracurricular activities and the parents to be active in the Parent-Teacher Association.
- monitoring play and social interactions among the student’s peers to facilitate age-appropriate social language and to support turn-taking, conflict resolution, and the development of communication repair strategies.

## **FAMILY/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION**

Educational planning team members should consider the following strategies for strengthening family and school communication:

- maintaining a communication system—such as setting up a home-to-school notebook; e-mail; teacher websites; and Google documents between school and home with regular entries from family, teacher(s), and allied professionals (e.g., educators of the deaf, speech-language pathologists, occupational and physical therapists)—regarding content vocabulary and concepts, stories and books read in class, audition, and language.
- providing parents and specialists (e.g., speech-language pathologist, ASL specialist) with an overview of class lessons and listing activities, content vocabulary and concepts, and books on the subject. This allows for preview, review, and carryover of classroom language.

## **TESTING MODIFICATIONS**

Testing modifications are often dictated by the state or school district. (Refer to testing guidelines for your specific educational district or state.) Modified testing may include, but is not limited to:

- untimed standardized tests at the onset of transition;
- a quiet, separate setting;
- test instructions read or signed to the student;
- an opportunity to be exposed to a variety of testing situations; and
- extra time for essay tests.

## **RESOURCES**

*Educating Students Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing: A Guide for Professionals in General Education Settings*—<http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu>

*Students with Cochlear Implants: Guidelines for Educational Program Planning*—<http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu>