



TOP TIPS FOR TALKING WITH A CHILD WHO USES A COCHLEAR IMPLANT

1. Speak with natural inflection, but NOT TOO FAST. SLOW IT DOWN a bit, and allow pauses. Use a nicely projected voice but do not shout.
2. Start your utterance with a couple of "gearing up to listen" words, because the child may miss the first words when you begin to speak. For example, "Now, children, put your toys away" may work better than "Put your toys away" because it may take the child a couple of words to "tune in" to your voice.
3. Use visual cues. Get the child's attention, then say it, then show it or sign it, then say it again to give the child a chance to listen to what you mean.
4. Become highly aware of nearby background noises, and try to speak in a quiet lull between coughs and clatters. If your utterance is overridden by an unexpected nearby background noise or multiple talkers, repeat or rephrase it in a natural way. Seat the child away from obvious sources of background noise such as a door that is opened frequently, noisy heating unit, bubbly aquarium, or children chatting in the computer area.
5. If the room is noisy, encourage the child to look at you as you speak, particularly if you are not using the FM system at the time. To help with speechreading (lipreading), keep your hands and book away from your face as you speak. Do not exaggerate lip movements.
6. Seat the child near you, not at the back of the group, for group listening activities. If the child needs to hear someone next to them, seat that person on the side where the child has the implant. Place children in a circle or horseshoe arrangement for discussions.
7. When you are using the FM transmitter, turn it on ONLY when you are speaking to the child or to a group that includes the child. After turning it on, wait two seconds before beginning to speak. Turn it OFF at all other times.
8. Allow the child to rephrase directions to herself before doing an independent task. Tactfully make certain that the child has understood the directions by listening to her rephrasing or by watching the child begin the task. Avoid asking "Did you hear me?" because the child will not know if he or she missed something.
9. If the child does not understand what you said the first time, say it a different way the second time. Rephrase, don't repeat your own words. Show that you are pleased when the child asks for clarification.
10. When another student asks a question or makes a comment, repeat or rephrase it to the group before responding or calling on the next student.
11. Help the child to identify and listen to any new distracting background noise so that he or she has a better chance of being able to ignore it. Remember that the child using a cochlear implant can not tell what direction a sound is coming from.
12. Try to have a One Talker Rule in the class during group time, with only one person speaking at a time. All the students will benefit from this approach!

