Cochlear Implants:

Navigating a Forest of Information... One Tree at a Time

Introduction

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GALLAUDET UNIVERSITY
LAURENT CLERC NATIONAL DEAF EDUCATION CENTER

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Introduction

According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), as of December 2010, approximately 219,000 people worldwide have received implants. In the United States, roughly 42,600 adults and 28,400 children have received them. Most children who receive an implant are between 2 and 6 years old (National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, 2011).

This resource, originally developed in 2003, is designed to assist parents and professionals in navigating their way through the extensive "forest" of information available on issues surrounding pediatric cochlear implantation. Included in the "trees" are content and links to resources about the technology, surgery, insurance, fitting the speech processor, the process of obtaining a cochlear implant and implant outcomes, and training the ear to listen as well as issues surrounding decision making, language and communication planning, and educational placement. All of the trees and the associated resources and references have been updated to reflect the changes that have emerged since the original document was developed. The most significant change observed in use of the technology itself (other than updates in the internal and external devices) relates to the increase in pediatric bilateral implantation. This trend is discussed in the section Considerations in the Cochlear Implant Process. The other significant change noted while developing this document is the extensive increase in on-line professional training resources and on-line spoken language habilitation resources available. There are links to these many resources and references throughout this document. This document also provides trees to fill in observed gaps in resources on Decision Making, Language and Communication Planning, Educational Placement, and Cochlear Implants and the Deaf Community.

So... let's move forward with navigating the dense forest of information on cochlear implants as well as a few new insights one tree at a time.

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The Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center is comprised of two federally mandated demonstration schools for students from birth through age 21 who are deaf. Located on the campus of Gallaudet University, these schools work in collaboration with a national network of exemplary programs and professionals to identify, research, develop, evaluate, and disseminate innovative curricula, materials, educational strategies, and technologies for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. The Clerc Center also provides training and technical assistance to families and programs throughout the United States, and serves as a model individualized educational program, working in close partnership with its students and their families.

Working for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children Throughout the United States

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