

Module 5: Cochlear Implants: The Basics

Section: Activation and Expectations

Activation

- Occurs approximately one month post-surgery
- May sound like beeps or squawks
- Reactions to this initial stimulation range from crying to smiling
- Initial reaction is not a predictor of future response

Activity 5.3: Preparing Families for the Day of Initial Activation

- A. Discuss the family's expectations for the activation appointment. It is important to understand a family's individual thoughts and hopes to make the initial activation visit as positive as possible.
- Guide the family in drafting a list of questions they may have for the cochlear implant audiologist who will be doing the activation.
 - Ask the family if they would be interested in having you contact the cochlear implant audiologist to learn more about the initial activation to discuss how you can support the cochlear implant programming/mapping process, provide updates regarding progress, and develop appropriate Individualized Family Service Plan goals to support the activation and programming process. Obtain the necessary permission.
- B. Sometimes it is helpful for families to view a video of an activation as a means of preparing for their own child's activation. It is recommended to **preview any activation videos** you may want to share to make sure they provide a beneficial learning opportunity for the family. You may find it appropriate to watch the videos with the family to invite discussion, or you can provide a link to the videos so the family can view them privately. It is important for families to be reminded that:
- these are examples of how those children reacted and that their child will have his or her own unique way of responding to sound for the first time;
 - crying and smiling are equally typical responses to initially hearing sound; and
 - as stated in the module, "initial reaction is not a predictor of future response."

- C. Prepare families for the process of upcoming programming appointments, which are often referred to as “mapping.” Knowing that there are upcoming appointments can relieve some of the stress of understanding everything about the implant during that first appointment. Sometimes just knowing how to charge the battery, change the program settings, and check the device is quite enough information for this first appointment which can be emotional. If families understand that they will be back in a week or so and can ask any additional questions then, it may reduce stress and worry.
- D. Watch the section of the module that contains the parent interviews. Learning from other parents’ stories is often helpful when preparing for an event as emotionally charged as the activation appointment.

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