

PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR COCHLEAR IMPLANTS

Is your child getting cochlear implants? Well, that sounds like a pretty big step, doesn't it? There are things that you can start doing right now in preparation for that big day. In this video, we're going to be talking about what you can do in those days leading up to your child getting their implants.

Hi, I'm Dr. Teresa Caraway from Hearing First. And we're here to empower you as parents, as families, so that your child who is deaf or hard of hearing can learn to listen, talk, read, sing, and thrive in life. Depending upon the age of your little one, they may not be of age yet or old enough to receive their first implant. That usually happens around nine months of age and sometimes younger.

It may feel like you're waiting a long time before your child is receiving their cochlear implants. And in that time you may feel like that you're just twiddling your thumbs and there's not much you can do to prepare or to help your child. But actually there's a lot of things you can do that will best prepare your child for the best possible outcome.

So in today's video, we're going to be talking about what are some of those things that you can start doing. Because really there's no such thing as wasting time or waiting. There's lots and lots of things you can start doing.

First thing is, wear your hearing technology or your hearing aids, all waking hours. Meaning that, maximize that if those little eyes are open their technology is on their head. Why? Well, because it helps stimulate those auditory pathways. In other words, it prepares their brain for that actual signal that they'll be receiving with a cochlear implant. And what we know is that children who have worn their hearing technology, who have then received their cochlear implants, that those children are well on their way to develop age appropriate listening and spoken language skills.

Second thing to do is when they're wearing their devices that you're talking to them, that you're reading to them, that you're expecting responses, that you're using a serve and return strategy with them. Even if your child has been diagnosed as severe to profoundly deaf or profoundly deaf, most likely there is residual hearing there that those pathways can be stimulated. And that's important because it's priming that brain to best prepare for that auditory signal of the new cochlear implant.

And third, be sure and write your questions down. Think about what you need to know more about and talk to your cochlear implant team about that. Trust me, there is no such thing as a stupid question. You need to feel empowered and you need to feel comfortable as you move into the surgery day with your child. You also might find it very helpful to connect with other families who've already gone through such a journey or who are currently going through the journey.

So, come join our Facebook group where you're going to find other families who are already on the journey or have been on this journey and who are willing and able to support you and share with you. So, in the days leading up to cochlear implantation, make sure that you keep your early intervention

appointments because your early interventionists can equip you with strategies, with techniques that are going to be so critical and important for using after your child receives their implant.

Learning those now and establishing those in your everyday routines will pay off great dividends and you'll be light years ahead for that day when your child is activated. At this point in the journey you may be feeling a lot of mixed emotions and kind of unsure about things, and that's okay. What you need to have confidence in is that you are the best person to make the best choices and decisions for your baby.

So, wherever you are on the journey, you are not alone. Hearing First is with you every step of the journey. For more helpful videos, make sure you subscribe.