Rationale for Considering Sign Language

- Sign language can provide accessible language to a child prior to implantation and through the early stages of auditory skill development.
- Sign language can provide supports for children as they "learn to listen" and transition to using their "listening to learn."
- Sign language can provide a bridge to the development of spoken language.
- Sign language is beneficial for children with cochlear implants with additional challenges who may not demonstrate the characteristics to become "auditory learners" or "talkers."
- Children with cochlear implants can benefit from becoming bilingual/bimodal (ASL and spoken English).

What We Are Learning

What IS supported in the research: Spoken language development is directly impacted by the intensity and quality of the spoken language to which a child is exposed.


What is NOT evident in the research: Signing impedes the development of spoken language on average across children.

~ Ed Bosco, Vice President, Clerc Center, Opening Remarks, Cochlear Implants and Sign Language: Building Foundations for Effective Educational Practices, April 2009

Importance of Assessment-Driven Planning

- Importance of implementing and monitoring the varied components of a child’s individualized language, communication, and educational program (as depicted on the "communication dashboard")

Importance of Looking at the Whole Child

Importance of:
- Acknowledging that the cochlear implant is only one of many life factors that impact a child’s development.
- Considering how personality, not only the quality of spoken language, significantly impacts each child’s social development.
- Looking at the benefit of children with cochlear implants having the opportunity of connecting with the Deaf community as well as the community at large so they may have experience in both environments.
- Helping children with cochlear implants feel accepted and validated as they are, not as people with something wrong that needs to be fixed.


~ Mary Koch-Kline, Auditory Education Consultant, Boyzton National Research Hospital, Conference presentation, “Experiences In the Field,” Cochlear Implants and Sign Language: Building Foundations for Effective Educational Practices, April 2009