

NEW MEXICO SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF POSITION STATEMENT ON COCHLEAR IMPLANTS

As the public State School for the Deaf, NMSD identifies and remains current on technological advances and opportunities for children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Cochlear implants are one type of technology that may support development of an individual's ability to use auditory pathways and/or spoken language. We respect the choice to use a cochlear implant and all other assistive devices.

NMSD recognizes the rights and benefits of parents making informed choices for their children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. NMSD supports families in the decision making process by working collaboratively with families and other agencies in gathering information. Parents should be thoroughly informed of the potential advantages, limitations and risks of implantation. Children are entitled to quality evaluation by a team of professionals, including those who are well versed in language, communication and child development, education of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, sensory integration and family centered practices. A trial period of hearing aid use is necessary as part of this evaluation including exploration of advanced amplification such as digital hearing aids and hearing aids with the capacity for dynamic speech recoding.

The expectations of implantation vary per individual child. NMSD advocates careful dialogue between the family, educational multidisciplinary team and implant team regarding expectations of the implant. These dialogues should include on-going across-domain educational assessment of the child and close collaboration between the education system and the implant team to support the functional expectations of the implant.

Educational programming needs to be communication-driven and should address the whole child taking into account her/his individual strengths and needs. Consideration of direct access to language and communication as well as goals and services are developed for each child consistent with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act which calls for Individual Family Service Plans (for children ages 0-3) and Individual Educational Plans (for students ages 3-21).

It is imperative that all children have rich and ongoing access to language, communication and learning opportunities. Research clearly shows absence of these opportunities during the critical years of ages 0-5 can result in developmental delays that will have a profound impact on a child's development the rest of his/her life. NMSD is committed to maximizing access in all its school and outreach programs. An appropriate educational environment for all children, with or without cochlear implants, optimizes integration of a child's senses to promote language, cognitive, social/emotional and overall development.

For further information access www.nad.org (National Association for the Deaf), www.babyhearing.org (Boys Town National Research Hospital), www.deafchildren.org (American Society for Deaf Children) www.agbell.org (Alexander Graham Bell)

NEW MEXICO SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN WHO HAVE COCHLEAR IMPLANTS

All NMSD programs provide comprehensive educational services with complete ancillary support and certified staff. Specific curricular and/or program components are available for children who are considering or have a cochlear implant as listed below. Applicability of all services is determined through the IFSP or I.E.P. process.

- ❖ Spoken Language Classroom where spoken language is the language of instruction (Albuquerque Preschool)
- ❖ Structured and supported interaction with hearing peers (Santa Fe and Albuquerque Preschools)
- ❖ Integrated (deaf/hearing) preschool and elementary classrooms (Santa Fe)
- ❖ Bilingual Classroom where ASL is the language of instruction with spoken/written English introduced as a 2nd language (All NMSD school programs)
- ❖ Individualized programming (All NMSD school programs)
- ❖ Curricula for development of auditory pathways and speech
- ❖ Certified Speech Language Pathologists
- ❖ Comprehensive assessment and evaluation
- ❖ Audiologists
- ❖ Deaf Role Models
- ❖ Cochlear Implant Mapping
- ❖ Working relationship with several implant centers
- ❖ Current amplification technology for trial phase of implant consideration
- ❖ Early Intervention Program
- ❖ School age outreach services to include initial language/communication assessment and profile (ASL; Spoken English; Written English), consultation with a student's LEA regarding language allocation and access to the curriculum, consultation to discuss curricular and environmental supports and modifications, information on events which support interaction with deaf peers to promote positive self identify
- ❖ Cochlear Implant Advisory Team (Structured forum and information sharing with individual families considering an implant for their child)