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IS MY CHILD A CANDIDATE FOR A COCHLEAR IMPLANT?

A child is a candidate for a cochlear implant if hearing aids are not providing sufficient benefit. Ask yourself the following questions

1. How much is my child struggling?
 - a. Does he hear and understand conversation when he standing close to the person speaking?
 - b. Does he hear and understand conversation when he is more than 3 feet away from the person speaking?
 - c. Does she hear and understand speech in competing noise?
 - d. How exhausted is he at the end of the day?
 - e. Does she rely on the FM to communicate?
 - f. Can he pick up incidental language or does he require direct teaching for most things?
2. Audiologic testing
 - a. What are the aided thresholds for each ear?
 - i. The goal is to have aided thresholds at 20 dB throughout the frequency range including at 3000, 4000 and 6000 Hz.
 - ii. If they are not at sufficiently soft levels can the hearing aid setting be changed to provide soft enough thresholds?
 - iii. If not, do different hearing aids provide soft enough thresholds?
NOTE: This may require turning the hearing aid louder than manufacturers suggested levels.
 - b. What are speech perception scores at
 - i. Normal conversational testing in quiet (50 dBHL)
 - ii. Soft conversational testing in quiet (35 dB HL)
 - iii. Normal conversation in competing noise (50 dBHL+5 SNR)
 - c. Children need to hear clearly in all three conditions to learn well. If a child hears well at normal conversation in quiet but cannot hear soft speech or hear in competing noise, the child will struggle to develop vocabulary, language, social communication, and academics.
3. Speech and language development
 - a. Is speech and language progressing?
 - i. The goal is one year progress in one year's time.
 - b. Is she getting appropriate therapy?
 - i. Is therapy auditory based – teaching developmental listening skills?
 - ii. Is the clinician experienced in developing auditory skills in children with hearing loss?

iii. Is the family involved in therapy?

NOTE: If the child is not receiving appropriate therapy, we cannot expect her to develop good skills.

4. Is the child wearing technology consistently?

a. Is the child bonded to the technology?

b. Does family, therapists, and school personnel expect the child to wear technology and to use it all waking hours?

c. Does the child have an FM system?

i. Is it used in all necessary situations?

ii. Is it used at home? Outside of school?

For children with hearing loss to do well, they need excellent technology which is appropriately set to provide good auditory access, it needs to be worn full time, therapy needs to be auditorily based to provide listening and spoken language, and family, therapists and school personnel need to expect and encourage good auditory performance. If any one part is missing, children will have a more difficult time learning. If everything that can be done is being done, and children are still struggling, it is time to consider a cochlear implant.