



Cochlear Implant Education Center

Cochlear Implants and Sign Language: Building Foundations for Effective Educational Practices

Establishing an ASL/English Bilingual Program to Meet the Needs of Children with Cochlear Implants



LAURENT CLERC
NATIONAL DEAF EDUCATION CENTER



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Susanne Scott, Cochlear Implant/Bilingual Specialist, Cochlear Implant Education Center;
Susan Schatz, Coordinator, ASL Department, Kendall Demonstration Elementary School (KDES)

Susanne Scott and Susan Schatz shared the evolution of programs and services for children with cochlear implants and other students with auditory access at Kendall School. They shared information about:

- The variety of classroom models and strategies examined over the past seven years at KDES for the growing and diverse population of children who have auditory access through cochlear implants and/or hearing aids. The models have included self contained classrooms focusing on spoken English, mixed groupings of students in one classroom with individualized plans for addressing when to use ASL or spoken English, and use of a spoken language resource teacher and/or spoken language resource classroom.
- Some of the additional supports provided at KDES, which include additional spoken language services provided by speech-language pathologists, development and use of spoken language communication guidelines, spoken language lunch time, and development of listening/literacy centers. Also explained was the range of services and supports including CI mapping, FM systems, active collaboration with local hospital implant centers, peer orientations, and support groups for students who have cochlear implants.
- The current language use model being implemented at KDES, which supports a bilingual/bimodal approach to the acquisition, learning, and use of American Sign Language and English to meet the needs of diverse students and includes:
 - Development of individualized plans for each student to document their language and communication profiles and recommendations for language development and use in both ASL and spoken English. These plans are based on formal and informal assessments which drive the plan for language allocation in a student's many life contexts (classroom, social, home, etc.) as well as identify needed support services.
 - Incorporation of bilingual/bimodal strategies in the classroom to support development and use of spoken English and American Sign Language (while maintaining each language as separate).
- Issues related to bilingual development for children with cochlear implants including:
 - The benefits of a bilingual approach to early language learning, cognitive growth, flexible learning, and social/emotional/identity development.
 - Acknowledgement that being bilingual does not have to imply equal development and use of ASL and spoken English.

- Research demonstrating the brain's capacity to develop bilingually/bimodally.
- What Kendall School has learned about the importance of school-wide and individualized language planning, staff training, joint ownership of all professionals in meeting the needs of students with cochlear implants (not only speech professionals), allocation of language use in the classroom, and inclusion of deaf professionals in planning and implementation of programs.
 - An explanation and examples of a variety of bilingual strategies and techniques that support development and use of both ASL and spoken English in the Kendall Parent-Infant Program, preschool, and first grade.



The Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center is comprised of two federally mandated demonstration schools for students from birth through age 21 who are deaf. Located on the campus of Gallaudet University, these schools work in collaboration with a national network of exemplary programs and professionals to identify, research, develop, evaluate, and disseminate innovative curricula, materials, educational strategies, and technologies for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. The Clerc Center also provides training and technical assistance to families and programs throughout the United States, and serves as a model individualized educational program, working in close partnership with its students and their families.

Working for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children Throughout the United States



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