



Cochlear Implant Center
**Westchester
 Medical Center**

Westchester Medical Center Health Network

CochlearConnections

News from the Cochlear Implant Center | Winter 2023

Cochlear Implant Center

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The Cochlear Implant Center at Westchester Medical Center, flagship of the Westchester Medical Center Health Network (WMCHHealth), provides coordinated audiology and speech-therapy services for cochlear implant patients and those considering this life-changing technology. It is the only center between New York City and Albany providing comprehensive services for children and adult patients.

The Cochlear Implant Center is staffed by a team of highly trained audiologists and speech pathologists with expertise in evaluation and rehabilitation services for individuals who are cochlear implant candidates and those who receive a cochlear implant. Cochlear implantation is a highly successful technology that allows deaf children to hear and speak, and enables deafened adults to enhance their lives. The Cochlear Implant Center provides comprehensive services such as individualized programming of the implant and speech-therapy services.



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Classroom Accommodations for Children with Hearing Loss

Children with hearing loss tend to require accommodations in the classroom setting to help ensure successful learning and communication. Below are some examples of the most common classroom accommodations, which can be adjusted to specifically to meet your child's needs:



PREFERENTIAL SEATING

The child should be seated near the front of the classroom with the better hearing ear closest to the teacher. Also consider where other students are positioned in the room.



BACKGROUND NOISE

Eliminate as much background noise in the classroom as possible so that speakers can be heard best. Some examples of ways to decrease background noise include closing the classroom door, seating the child away from noisy windows and air conditioning units and if possible, choosing a classroom with carpeting.



FACE THE STUDENT TO THE PERSON TALKING

Even if the child can hear well with their cochlear implant or hearing aid, they still benefit from lip reading, gestures and facial expressions to better understand what is being said.



PRE-TEACH NEW TOPICS

Children with hearing loss benefit from multiple exposures to new concepts and vocabulary. It is important that the school Speech-Language Pathologist and/or Teacher of the Deaf work with the child on these same concepts and present the information ahead of classroom learning.



GET ATTENTION BEFORE SPEAKING TO THE CLASS

The teacher should ask for attention and wait until the child is focused on the speaker before providing any important information.



REPEAT OR REPHRASE

By providing repetition or saying the message in an alternate way, the child with hearing loss has another chance to pick up any words they may have missed.

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Spotlight on Samantha Morgan, AuD, CCC-A

What do you like best about being an Audiologist for the Cochlear Implant Center?

I love getting to work with my patients over an extended amount of time! I enjoy getting to know them and their families, checking in and catching each other up on our lives at the start of each appointment. When working with children, it is particularly fun to watch them grow and see all of the new things they have learned between appointments.

What do you like to do in your personal time when you are not working?

When not at work, I spend as much time as I can with my daughter and husband. We love to be outside hiking, or even better, on a beach! We are looking forward to taking our little one on her first hike as soon as it is warm enough.

Tell us one fun fact that people don't know about you

Throughout my childhood and adolescence, I was very involved in musical theater. I still love to sing and see Broadway shows whenever I can.

You can never have too many... recipes to try or restaurants to visit! I love to cook and try new foods.

Nobody could stop me from... watching Formula One races every Sunday of the season.



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Implant Recipient Perspective

Meet Lewis. Upon visiting Westchester Medical Center's Cochlear Implant Center, the clinical team learned that he had an unsuccessful trial with bilateral hearing aids which were made worse by frequent infections. His hearing and communication difficulties declined during the COVID-19 pandemic with the use of face masks, limiting his ability to lip-read. Lewis met the candidacy criteria for cochlear implantation at his initial evaluation and received his right cochlear implant on June 12, 2022. While he has only been using the implant for a short amount of time, his joy in being able to hear has been an inspiration! He has kindly shared his thoughts and impressions of his hearing journey so far.



Q: What made you decide to get a cochlear implant?

LEWIS: I've been reading lips for over 20 years, and then COVID hit and everyone was wearing masks. I had no way of communicating because people were very reluctant to lower their masks. I work for the U.S. Army, and the Audiologist at the military hospital told me that I needed a cochlear implant, as regular hearing aids were of no use to me.

Q: How did getting your implant affect the way other people—family, friends and coworkers—now interact with you?

LEWIS: I'm able to join group discussions and actually hear them instead of just getting small portions of conversations by reading lips. I've been told by others that I now communicate with much more confidence.

Q: How did getting a cochlear implant change your work environment?

LEWIS: I like being able to participate in group discussions and meetings without being singled out afterwards to have someone review the meeting with me to fill in anything I may have missed. As an electrician, I constantly have to communicate with customers, and before, I had to have someone with me to handle the interaction part of the job. Not having to wait for people to repeat things for me saves a lot of time.

Q: Did your hearing loss impact any of your hobbies? How has getting a cochlear implant changed that?

LEWIS: Not really. My only real hobby is riding my Harley Davidson motorcycle, and I don't wear my implant due to discomfort by wearing a helmet over it.

Q: What is your favorite thing to hear with your cochlear implant?

LEWIS: I'm still pretty new to the implant. I've only had it for about 3 months, so my favorite thing to hear is basically everything and everyday sounds. Hearing the grandkids is a special treat.

Upcoming Seminar

We are excited to host our first Educational Seminar in March 2023. Please join us for this special event. If you are interested, RSVP to reserve your seat today! Families are welcome.

PRESENTED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
WESTCHESTER MEDICAL CENTER COCHLEAR IMPLANT CENTER
AND PARTNERS IN HEARING

Succeeding at School with Hearing Loss & Cochlear Implants

Join our Implant Team, Educational Advocate, Diane Slonim, PhD, SLP, and other parents to learn ways to help your child achieve at school.

- > This is a family event with patients and siblings invited
- > Children's crafts/activities will be available during the presentation
- > Cochlear Implant companies and representatives from Partners in Hearing and Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) will be available to answer questions

Sunday, March 19, 2023
2 – 4:30 p.m.
Refreshments Provided

Maria Fareri
Children's Hospital
100 Woods Road
Valhalla, NY 10595
Conference Rooms A & B
(Main Level next to Panera)

For more information contact:
Sabrina Vicente
Department Coordinator
914.493.4634 or
cochlearimplantcenter@wmchealth.org

"Hear" in the Hudson Valley
Cochlear Implant Center
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Iona College Collaboration

Westchester Medical Center's Cochlear Implant Center is collaborating with Iona College's inaugural certificate program: Interdisciplinary Advanced Certificate in Deafness (IACD). IACD prepares students to provide high-quality, early childhood speech/language education services to children with varying degrees of hearing loss. These children need early intervention with school-based professionals who recognize their specific needs.

Beginning in Spring 2023, eight students from the IACD program will visit the Cochlear Implant Center, where they will have the opportunity to observe audiological evaluations, cochlear implant evaluations, activations and mappings as well as an aural rehabilitation session with a Speech-Language Pathologist certified in Auditory-Verbal Therapy. The students will also attend a monthly Cochlear Implant Team meeting and tour the main hospital with Katrina Stidham, MD, Chief, Division of Neurotology, Department of Otolaryngology/Head and Neck Surgery and Director of the Cochlear Implant Center. Four of these students will also complete an on-site practicum in the Cochlear Implant Center.

As providers, we recognize a significant lack of professionals in surrounding communities with a strong knowledge base of hearing loss. Our team is confident that the IACD program will increase penetration into educational settings, improving services, limiting barriers and raising awareness for children with hearing loss.

Classroom accommodations *continued from page 1*



PROVIDE VISUALS

When information is presented auditorily, the child should also be provided with a visual. This can come in many forms such as gestures, use of the whiteboard, captioning videos and sharing student notes.



CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

"Checking for understanding" is an important action by the educational professional and the child with hearing loss to help make sure that the child understood what they heard. It is best for the professional to ask open-ended questions instead of "did you understand?" As children get older, they may develop a quiet hand gesture with the teacher to signal they did not understand.



USE OF REMOTE MICROPHONES

Teachers who work closely with the student should be familiar with and understand the purpose of the child's remote microphone technology to ensure consistent use.

Different ways to keep sound processors on the head for both children and adults!



Toupee Tape Otoclip Headbands



Pilot Cap Eargear Earmolds

Online resources for purchasing these items:

- **Amazon**
- **Etsy:** CochHats, Purplecat Charms, Ear Suspenders, Geniebands, and more!
- **Earmold impressions** through your audiologist
- **Some headbands and Otoclips** are offered through your cochlear implant manufacturer
- **Hearing Henry**

Westchester/Rockland Walk4Hearing

Westchester Medical Center's Cochlear Implant Center is excited to rejoin the Walk4Hearing campaign at their annual Westchester/Rockland event. This year's walk is scheduled for Saturday, May 6 at FDR State Park in Yorktown, NY. If you are interested in joining our team, please contact cochlearimplantcenter@wmchealth.org.



"Who's Who" on your child's educational team?

Children with hearing loss often work with hearing loss-trained professionals in addition to their classroom teachers. The need for these trained professionals is usually determined at your child's 504 plan or IEP meeting and is based on your child's unique needs.

Speech-Language Pathologist

Speech-Language Pathologists work with students who have difficulty developing language and/or learning to speak. School-based speech and language services can be provided via one-on-one sessions or in groups. It is important that your child's Speech-Language Pathologist has the expertise and knowledge about how to work with a student with hearing loss.

Teachers of the Deaf (TOD) or Hard of Hearing

Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing are educators who have specialized training and are qualified to teach children with hearing loss. They provide support to children, parents and families as well as other professionals involved with the child's education.

Depending on a child's needs, TODs may provide direct instruction and/or classroom support. They can meet with your child to explain and review classroom materials. TODs also help your child's teachers understand their unique listening needs and how their equipment works.

Educational Audiologists

Educational Audiologists assist with a child's hearing aid technology in school. They can test your child's hearing aid or cochlear implant and confirm that other technology (such as a remote microphone) is properly connected to your child's device. Educational Audiologists assess the classroom to assure that your child is seated in the best place for listening in the classroom and that the sound in the classroom is appropriate for learning. They also teach other professionals how to use your child's equipment. If there is a problem with the child's hearing aid or cochlear implant, the Educational Audiologist will contact you and/or your child's clinic audiologist.

American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreter

If your child uses American Sign Language to communicate or ASL was your child's first language and they continued to have difficulty understanding spoken language, an ASL interpreter is needed in all learning environments. The ASL interpreter will interpret the teacher's spoken language.

Special Education Teachers

Special Education Teachers provide small group or one-on-one support to students who have difficulty learning in the classroom. They review material and often teach in a way that is more conducive to how the child learns. Special Education Teachers typically only work with students who have learning challenges or developmental disabilities.

Educational Psychologists

An Educational Psychologist is a professional whose expertise and focus are in teaching. They assist children who have difficulty learning and/or understanding what is being taught in the classroom and can also help them learn how to communicate with others. Educational Psychologists can also help children work through difficult or negative feelings related to their hearing loss. These specialized professionals help schools to develop ways of working with children and may be involved in assessments for special educational needs.

Director of Special Education

The Director of Special Education is responsible for making decisions about services that children receive in the school system. They are also responsible for supervising all educational system professionals who work with the children. Every school district will have a Director of Education, and there may be a Director of Education within the school itself.