

Audiological Intervention

Families of infants diagnosed with hearing loss may be met with a confusing array of opinions about ways they should communicate with their infant. The fact is, there are a variety of ways of appropriate methods or strategies for communicating with infants with hearing loss. The goal is to help a family find a successful match for them and their infant as early as possible. The process of developing communication should be flexible, changing over time as the infant's needs change. Parents may ask the physician for information as to which approach is best. The most appropriate response is to guide the family to be flexible and to work with their infant-parent specialists to gather information on all approaches to support their decision-making. Communication options include:

- American Sign Language
- Listening and Spoken Language
- Cued Speech
- Total Communication

For parents who decide to provide their infant and young children with amplification, early intervention services can provide a vital opportunity for stimulation of the child's auditory system. This can be accomplished through the use of hearing aids, FM systems, cochlear implants or other assistive technology.

Infants with severe to profound bilateral hearing loss or auditory neuropathy and who do not benefit from traditional amplification may benefit from a cochlear implant. Cochlear Implantation usually can occur between 12-18 months of age. A referral to a cochlear implant center should be made when parents are seeking information regarding cochlear implantation and should not be delayed. The Food and Drug Administration has approved cochlear implants in children as young as 12 months of age.