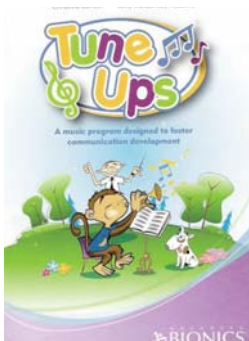


Chris, Amy and the TuneUps Choir



Music, Kids, and Cochlear Implants

BY CHRIS BARTON, M.M., MT-BC



The cochlear implant (CI) is a medical device that can restore hearing to an individual with a severe to profound hearing loss. It bypasses the damaged part of the ear and sends sound signals directly to the hearing nerve.

However, aural rehabilitation is required to assist the implanted individual in making sense out of the sounds they now hear. This is especially true for young children who are just beginning to learn spoken language. The current trend is to implant at one and certainly before three years of age, which means that more CI children are now in early intervention programs.

Music perception has traditionally received far less attention than speech perception in CI research and development. Fortunately, new technology has allowed music listening and appreciation to climb to the forefront of development goals among all the CI makers. *After spoken language, quality music experiences are the number one request of both parents and users alike.*

Music therapists have a wonderful opportunity to impact spoken language development in these children. We know that children are born with the capacity to learn both language and music, provided they are given access to both stimuli at an early age. We also know that music, like language, follows a time-ordered, developmental path. Because of these similarities as well as complementary differences in auditory processing, music makes an ideal motivating companion to an auditory-oral approach to habilitation.

For suggestions of how to use music with CI children see the sidebar and visit www.HearingJourney.com. Go to the *Listening Room*. Once there, click on *Kids* and you will find a *TuneUps* and *Circle Time* section.



All songs and activities are free to download. There is also information on how to order the TuneUps CD, a collection of songs and activities written by Chris Barton for use with young implanted children. Several of her students sing on the recording.

Basic Tips

Consider the following when working with newly implanted children:

1. Sing unaccompanied. More than one sound at a time can be confusing at first.
2. Introduce instruments one at a time and let the child explore how the sound is made.
3. Put a word to the sound the instrument makes, for instance, "shake, shake, shake" or "boom, boom, boom."
4. If using a CD player, be sure to have the child assist in putting the CD in and making it play. Often, these children will not be aware of where the sound is coming from and may not even recognize it as music.
5. Work in a quiet environment, so extraneous noise does not conflict with the music experience.
6. Call attention to when the music stops and when it plays. A simple "stop" and a 1-2-3, Go!" will work. Another technique is to point to your ear and say "I hear the music" and then, "Oh, the music stopped."



Chris Barton

MM, MT-BC is in private practice and works at the St. Joseph Institute for the

Deaf. She is also the composer and co-creator, with Amy Robbins CCC-SLP, of TuneUps, a CD for children with cochlear implants. Contact: cgbarton@scbgloabl.net