

Fun and Games!

Ashley S. Garber, M.S. CCC-SLP,
LSLS Cert. AVT® and
Mary Ellen Nevins, Ed.D.



Justin P. –
Cochlear™ Nucleus®
Implant User

Hear now. And always



Choosing Toys and Games

Whether your child is home from school for the day, off on a vacation or just relaxing on the weekend, you may feel challenged to keep him or her busy with activities that will provide support for the development of speech, language and auditory skills. The “Fun and Games” series offers great resources for activities that will meet those needs.

As a parent or caregiver of a child with a cochlear implant, you may be challenged to continue the work on auditory skill development that is started in school and in therapy by carrying over auditory goals into the home environment. You may feel that your child’s therapist or teacher has the advantage of being able to tap into an infinite variety of toys and materials at his or her disposal and wonder how to keep up. The following tips provide guidance on choosing appropriate toys and games for your child and also on noticing and utilizing the many materials available around you.

Toys that do double duty

When choosing toys and games for purchase, look for those that will meet your child’s needs over time. Use your imagination to consider ways in which you might use a toy that are not described on the box or specified in the directions.

Think about:

- Choosing toys that are free of commercial branding. The television shows and characters that are popular today may not be so interesting a year from now.
- Finding games that can be simplified for younger children or that have variations on rules of play for different age groups.
- Selecting toys that are free of sound effects. This will allow you and your child to script your own make-believe routines with objects rather than using toys that talk “for” you.
- Using competitive games (e.g., Connect Four) as reinforcement for speech practice or Ling Sound practice. Doing so adds interest and makes the activity seem less like “therapy.”
- Selecting games that have pieces or game boards with colorful pictures that can also be used for storytelling and use of descriptive language.

Games from Ravensburger® and eeboo® are particularly recommended for their use of colorful images, variations for play, and flexible applications.

Trash becomes treasure

Of course, toys and games do not have to be store bought to provide hours of fun and valuable practice for auditory and language goals. With a little imagination, household items can be fashioned into toys or put into service for auditory skill development.

Consider collecting:

- A box of adult clothing for a dress-up box. The more out of fashion you consider the garment, the more fun it will be for play. Don’t forget hats, sunglasses, purses and bathing suits. Role playing and pretend play activities are more fun in costume.
- Orphaned household items (single socks, keys without locks etc.) and objects with interesting shapes and textures for a “feel it” box or treasure chest. These “toys” can be put into service for describing and following directions activities.
- Egg cartons, toilet paper rolls and other recyclables for arts and crafts fun and for creating auditory games for giving and following directions.
- Cardboard boxes for child-size experiences. Draw wheels and a license plate onto a flat box to make a car, cut a door in a large box to make a refrigerator or a house.
- Stacks of magazines for use in experience books, illustrated stories, and collages.



No toys necessary

Today's marketing campaigns encourage families to purchase the latest products by pushing the idea that learning will occur best with newer and better toys. However, not to be overlooked is the idea that a child will enjoy and learn from playing with the objects that you already have at home, particularly in the early years.

Look for these objects around your house:

- Muffin tins for sorting.
- A coffee can with a hole cut in the lid for filling and dumping.
- Reusable plastic containers in different sizes with lids that can become blocks for building and knocking down.
- Measuring cups for pouring and dumping sand and water.
- Empty cans and containers for making music.
- Pots and pans for a pretend restaurant or cooking school.
- Paper plates and plastic cutlery for tea parties and picnics.

The game of pretend

In the preschool years, children begin to learn through the act of "make believe".

For auditory memory and language comprehension and expression, there is no better tool. The joys and benefits of imaginative play continue for older children as a way of practicing social scenarios and pragmatic language. As a parent/playmate you can facilitate these play activities by creating opportunities and by providing materials for a range of scenarios.

Ideas include:

- Playing restaurant with dishes, menus, hats and aprons. Don't forget that a fancy restaurant may require quite a different set of props from a fast food joint.
- Shopping in a grocery store, clothing store, or shoe store with lists, carts, and cash registers.
- Going to school with backpacks and books.
- Traveling to the beach with towels and sunglasses.
- Going to grandma's with a suitcase and a car.
- Working in an office with a computer and a telephone.
- Fixing furniture or working on a car with tools and supplies.

The possibilities for pretend play are as endless as your imagination and that of your child. Enjoy the games and watch your children, and their language, grow.

Fun Finds: Resources at Your Fingertips

Wondering where to go to find new, creative ideas for stimulating language, practicing auditory skills or engaging interests? There are a myriad of options, right at your fingertips.

The World Wide Web

The Internet has become the go-to resource for all aspects of our lives today. It is no different when it comes to locating fun and functional games and activities with benefits for children with cochlear implants.

For online activities take a look at:

- **www.storyplace.org** for stories and related activities for children of all ages. The area of the site geared toward preschoolers has short stories on a variety of themes presented with audio and text. Each theme has a related online activity, take home activity, parent activity and reading list. The elementary library provides more interactive stories told with a combination of audio/text and text only pages. Along with the story, each theme provides a printout activity and a reading list. Both libraries are available in English and Spanish.
- **www.timeforkids.com** provides games and activities for elementary aged children. This site provides typical action games but for the most language and auditory skills work, look for those that you can play along with your child such as the Picture Puzzlers where you can identify differences in two nearly identical photos.
- **www.dressupgames.com** for interactive click and drag games on a variety of themes. Depending on their interests, children are taken to various areas of the site where they can choose to dress dolls in different clothing, create an animal, or decorate a cake. These activities are excellent for use with goals related to following auditory directions, listening to descriptive language, and practicing auditory sequencing. This site provides links to games for children of all ages, from preschool to junior high.
- **www.puzzlersparadise.com** for logic problems to complete with children of all ages. These logic puzzles provide opportunities to work on problem-solving skills particularly when approached with a child's auditory and language goals in mind. Parental support will be required to choose appropriate puzzles for children of various ages as the puzzles are not grouped for age of child. Taking a look in advance will allow you to pre-determine how you can use each puzzle to practice vocabulary, spoken language and auditory goals.

For printable materials try:

- **www.dltk-kids.com** for children's crafts, coloring pages, and theme projects.
- **www.freekidscrafts.com** for a variety of crafts to make with and for children. Search the site by project to make or utilize materials that you have on hand.
- **www.edhelper.com** for printable materials for use with preschoolers to teens. Activities include games, puzzles, theme projects, worksheets and more.



Chevonne A. –
Bilateral Cochlear™
Nucleus® Implant User

The World of Apps

With smartphones and hand-held devices, opportunities for language stimulation are now literally at your fingertips. Do you want stories for your child? Vocabulary cards? Learning to Listen sounds? Articulation practice? As they say... "there's an app for that!"

Below is a sampling of the multitude of apps available:

- **Model Me Going Places 2** by Model Me Kids, LLC – an app for iPad® that shows sequence stories of children going various places (e.g. a restaurant, the doctor). A great way to work on the language of sequences, pragmatic language and vocabulary.
- **Speech Tutor** is a speech therapy app to give a clear overview of what happens inside the mouth and throat during speech. It offers 132 animations depicting both a front view and side view of the mouth so children have an accurate, visible example of how to create sounds.
- **Articulation Station Pro** offers exercises to practice 22 sounds at both the word and sentence levels, as well as the longer story level.
- **Tally Tots** is a therapy app for toddlers who need help with verbs, two-word combinations, counting and concepts. It includes 20 mini-games that help kids have fun with numbers, a sing-along counting song and an assisted counting guide that helps toddlers count all the way to 100.
- **Talking Pierre the Parrot** is a virtual pet who repeats everything the child says in a funny voice. Although not a dedicated speech therapy app, it is a great way to motivate children to articulate correctly so Pierre sounds good.



Leah A. –
Bilateral Cochlear™
Nucleus® Implant User

Back to Books

Perhaps you prefer texts that you can hold in your hands and refer to time and again. These are but a few of many books that provide ideas for games and activities—indoors and out—that can be adapted to a variety of auditory and language goals for children of all ages.

Kranowitz, C. (2003).

The Out of Sync Child has Fun.
New York: Berkley Publishing Group.

Rooyackers, P. (2002).

101 Language Games for Children: Fun and Learning with Words, Stories and Poems (SmartFun Activity Books).
Alameda, CA: Hunter House.

Scanlon, K. (2012).

My Toddler Talks: Strategies and Activities to Promote Your Child's Language Development
North Charleston, SC: CreateSpace.

Schwartz, S. (2004).

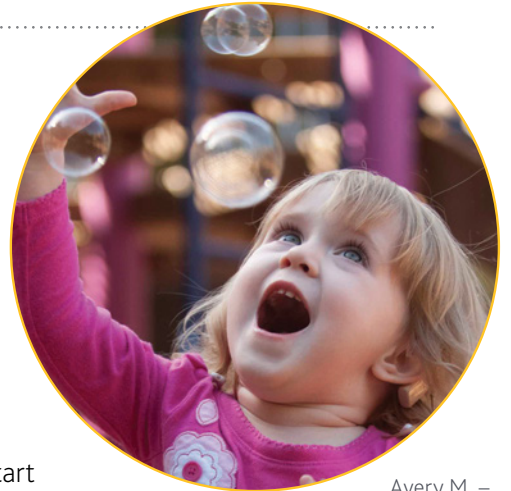
The New Language of Toys.
Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House.

Wiertsema, H. (2002).

101 Movement Games for Children: Fun and Learning with Playful Moving. (SmartFun Activity Books).
Alameda, CA: Hunter House.

Participation in Summer or After-School Activities

During the school year, the child with a cochlear implant has an Individualized Education Program to guide the goals and objectives of each school activity and interaction. Equipment usage, participation guidelines and specific accommodations have been discussed and put into writing for all of the professionals who work with a child. Come summer and after school, parents are on their own to ensure that their child is receiving the greatest benefit from the activities in which he or she is enrolled. The following tips provide guidance in approaching these situations.



Avery M. –
Bilateral Cochlear™
Nucleus® Implant User

Prior to beginning any extracurricular activity, you might:

- Arrange a meeting with the counselor, coach or supervisor before the official start of the activity to:
 - share your vision and goals for your son or daughter's participation in the activity or sport.
 - review effective communication strategies particular to your child.
- Research existing assistive technology that may be appropriate to your child's particular sport or activity.
- Spend time discussing the challenges and expectations of a new activity with your child.

Care and maintenance of the cochlear implant is a concern that parents must share with summer professionals. To familiarize coaches and counselors with implant components, you might consider preparing a "Need to Know" sheet with information regarding your child's implant device and any special requirements for its care and maintenance.



Jillian S. –
Bilateral Cochlear™
Nucleus® Implant User

Considerations would include:

- Determining in advance steps that will be taken if the child reports that he/she cannot hear.
- Reviewing precautions for static electricity and water exposure.
- Providing any necessary protective gear (helmets, wetbags, etc) and demonstrating their usage.
- Supplying the activity director with extra batteries and/or other supplies that would aid troubleshooting should loss of sound occur.

Above all, parents will want to assure the coach or supervisor that the child with an implant will be more like the other children in the group than unlike them. Accommodations for the child's hearing loss should not overshadow the enjoyment of summer and all of its activities.

Maximizing Auditory Skills with Outdoor Play

As a parent of a child with a cochlear implant, you are challenged to integrate his or her auditory and language targets into every aspect of your day. You may have accumulated quite a repertoire of games and activities that are appropriate for indoor play through participation in therapy sessions and communication with your child's school. Not to be overlooked; however, is the range of traditional outdoor games and activities that you played as a child and that can easily be adapted to focus on specific auditory and language goals.

Classic activities to target auditory memory skills:

- **Jump rope rhymes and choosing leaders** – Both activities offer opportunities to practice rhyming sentences. Rhythm is equally important. Some rope games also give the chance for auditory attention practice when the jumper calls others to participate. Favorite rhymes include “Teddy Bear Teddy Bear” “H*E*L*P” and “Queen Bee”, while classic rhymes for choosing leaders include “One Potato, Two Potato” and “Bubble Gum, Bubble Gum.”
- **Scavenger Hunt** – this favorite game can be played completely auditorily by listing objects to be gathered by each participant. The number and complexity of items can vary dependent on the skill of each player. For example an early listener might look for “a leaf, a stick, and a rock” while more experienced listeners could find “something a bird eats, what you'd find on a tree, and something that might stick to your shoe.”

Games to practice following directions:

- **Obstacle Course** – this active game has endless variations and provides a perfect opportunity for work on following multi-step directions. As with all of the games described, the language used can be varied to accommodate different skill levels. Parents might consider using siblings with higher language levels to model listening and memory skills on their turn.
- **Mother May I** – in this classic game, as “Mother” describes a series of moves to each player, language can be varied to challenge listening skills. “Mother” might contrast “hop” vs. “walk walk walk” vs. “sliiiide” for very early listeners or challenge experienced listeners to “take 3 baby steps after you hop backwards 4 times”.

- **Simon Says** – this old favorite can be endlessly modified to accommodate a variety of listening and language goals from one-word actions (e.g. “Simon says ‘jump’”) to multi-step directions (e.g. “Simon says touch your nose with your right hand and then turn around”). It is a wonderful choice for a group activity.

Games with auditory/language modifications:

- **Tag** – there are endless variations of tag, why not create one just for your little listener? Where the classic TV Tag requires players to shout out the name of a television show to avoid being tagged, variations like Animal Tag or Tool Time Tag requires players to come up with objects within a particular category to continue their freedom. If the “listener” happens to be “it”, then their job is to determine if the words that the other players use are actually members of the “safe” category.
- **Relay Race** – rather than having children hand off a baton between legs of a race, require them to trade messages with their teammates to continue their run. Ideas might include finishing sentences or naming objects in a category. In the first example, each runner might have to complete a sentence like “My favorite food is ...” before taking off. In the second example, one runner completes his leg by shouting out “Furniture!” and the next runner must name an item in that category before he can leave for his leg. That player then yells “Furniture!” to the next runner and so on as the race continues.

There are myriad other popular outdoor games that either involve language and listening skills or can be modified to include them. Once you have a firm understanding of your child's goals, the possibilities for targeting those skills through fun and active outdoor play are only as limited as your imagination. For more ideas on classic games to play with children, see pbslearningmedia.org

Hear now. And always

As the global leader in implantable hearing solutions, Cochlear is dedicated to helping people with moderate to profound hearing loss experience a life full of hearing. We have provided more than 550,000 implantable devices, helping people of all ages to hear and connect with life's opportunities.

We aim to give people the best lifelong hearing experience and access to innovative future technologies. We have the industry's best clinical, research and support networks.

That's why more people choose Cochlear than any other hearing implant company.

As your partner in hearing for life, Cochlear believes it is important that you understand not only the benefits, but also the potential risks associated with any cochlear implant or hybrid implant.

You should talk to your hearing healthcare provider about who is a candidate for a cochlear implant or a hybrid implant. Before any surgery, it is important to talk to your doctor about CDC guidelines for pre-surgical vaccinations. Cochlear implants and hybrid implants are contraindicated for patients with lesions of the auditory nerve, active ear infections or active disease of the middle ear.

Cochlear implantation and hybrid implantation are surgical procedures, and carry with them the risks typical of surgery. You may lose residual hearing in the implanted ear. Electrical stimulation may result in some side effects, including ringing in the ear, stimulation of the facial nerve; in rare cases this may cause pain. Though rare, it is possible that additional surgery may be required at some point to resolve complications with a cochlear implant or hybrid implant.

For complete information about risks and benefits of cochlear implantation, please refer to the Nucleus Package Insert available at www.Cochlear.com/US/NucleusIndications.

©2019. Apple, the Apple logo, FaceTime, Made for iPad logo, Made for iPhone logo, Made for iPod logo, iPhone, iPad Pro, iPad Air, iPad mini, iPad and iPod touch are trademarks of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries. App Store is a service mark of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries.

©Cochlear Limited 2019. All rights reserved. Hear now. And always and other trademarks and registered trademarks are the property of Cochlear Limited or Cochlear Bone Anchored Solutions AB. The names of actual companies and products mentioned herein may be the trademarks of their respective owners.

www.Cochlear.com/US

Follow us on    

Cochlear Americas
13059 East Peakview Avenue
Centennial, CO 80111 USA
Telephone: 1 303 790 9010
Support: 1 800 483 3123

Cochlear Canada Inc.
2500-120 Adelaide Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 1T1 Canada
Support: 1 800 483 3123