



**Johannesburg Cochlear Implant
News letter
Autumn Edition 2012**

STAFF CHANGES



As many of you are aware there have been some changes at JCIC. Leanne who has been with us from the early days of JCIC has moved on. She has joined Southern ENT so we will still have contact with her as she will be our Customer Relations Coordinator. We will miss her friendly face and efficiency but wish her happiness in her new position.

The new face at our front desk is Requell Munnik who started with us in April. We welcome her and look forward to working with her as she learns more about the amazing world of cochlear implants.

Paddi Roux who was a founder member of the Johannesburg Cochlear Implant Programme has decided to move out of the field after twenty years. Her knowledge and expertise in this area will be sorely missed but she will continue to be available to see people for aural rehabilitation. We know that it is always difficult to move on and work with a new audiologist and we hope to make this transition as easy as possible for Paddi's existing clients. Thank you Paddi for all you have contributed to the field of cochlear implants in Johannesburg.

JCIC ADMIN HOURS



As from 1st April 2012 our office hours will be from 8:30am to 4:30pm Monday to Friday.

Contact numbers: 011 482-6141 or 011 356-6198 (new).

**WELCOME TO OUR NEW
RECIPIENTS**



Congratulations and good luck to our 2012 recipients implanted since our last newsletter:

Adults: Yannick Claesen (2nd ear); Marlene Baldry; Shiraz Jadwat; Andries Holliday; Andre Poll Jonker.

Children: Skye Bennett and Salmaan Angamia Ismael.

**ASSESSING PROGRESS IN THE
YOUNG CHILD**



Learning to hear with a cochlear implant is a process for both adults and children. Some recipients are fortunate and quickly learn to use the cochlear implant effectively and become proficient communicators even on the telephone.

For others the process takes much longer and good telephone use remains just outside their reach. These differences may be due to the cause and length of the hearing loss, motivation and need to use the telephone and any additional difficulties that the recipient may have.

When working with children with cochlear implant we need to remember that we have made the choice for the child. It is our responsibility to ensure that the child has the language he needs to be educated and realise his potential in society.

In some cases we are aware that spoken language may be the child's second language and that sign language will be the language for education. In most families, the choice to go for cochlear implant is because the family wants to give the child access to spoken language and hope that their child will be educated in an oral environment.

What does it take to make this happen?

We know that early implantation is a major factor. The child who receives a cochlear implant by the age of two years has a better chance of entering the mainstream educational environment. Good access to spoken language during the critical first five language learning years may mean that the child is able to function at age appropriate language levels by the time he starts school. If this is what the family wants for their child it is important that they monitor the child's progress and assess whether the child is progressing at a rate where he will be "language ready" for school.

So if early implantation alone is not enough what else do we need to be doing?

Consistent and appropriate listening and language stimulation is critical.

Is this the speech therapist's job?

No! Language development does not happen in one or two sessions a week. It is ongoing which means that the people in the child's everyday environment play the critical role.

The speech therapist needs to assess the child's skills and plan appropriate language intervention, then it is her role to empower the family and caregivers to promote listening and speech and language development.

What steps should families take to promote appropriate language development?

Be part of the speech therapy process. This means that you should attend the sessions and be actively involved (this does not mean checking your cellphone messages while the therapist works!)

Plan the way forward with the therapist to ensure that the suggestions she makes are things that you are able to implement. You need to be comfortable with the way you communicate with your child and in the beginning this may not come naturally to you.

Involve the whole family. In the years that we have been working with children with hearing loss we have found that many more fathers have become actively involved in caring for and stimulating their children. The early role of handling finances and taking care of the "technical aspects" only is seldom seen and shared parenting where both parents understand how to stimulate and encourage their child is becoming the norm. When families rally round and the "job of teaching language" does not fall on one person the joy of communication grows.

Don't become complacent. The shock of discovering that a child has a hearing problem can be devastating. At times the cochlear implant seems like a miracle and when your child responds to the first sounds and says the first words it is easy to think "we've done it- it's worked!" As you know this is only beginning and as the saying goes "The person who moves a mountain begins by carrying away small stones".

Do not fall into the trap of always making allowances for the child because of the difficulties he has faced – an "ag shame" child for whom you do everything will find it difficult to reach his full potential. Enjoy the moment, raise the bar and move on – remember the time for formal schooling is not far away.

In South Africa we have limited educational options and a child who does not have age appropriate language may find it difficult to find a suitable and affordable educational setting. It is essential that when we don't take a back seat and enjoy the new words that the child says, forgetting until he is due to go to school that it's not just words but whole sentences that he needs!

It goes without saying that an optimally functioning device is essential for oral language development. Remember to carry out the weekly checks on the device and contact your audiologist if you have any concerns. Consistent use of a well functioning cochlear implant provides the foundation for you and your child to build on with the skills and guidance of your speech therapist.

Be a critical consumer and an active communication partner!

We have received some requests from parents to help them become critical consumers and assess their children's needs and progress. We are planning to put together a presentation that takes a look at device management, therapy intervention and educational realities in South Africa. We hope that we can involve some of our families who have been through the process and that this will be the start of a parent support and advocacy group.

WATCH THIS SPACE!



The first person to receive a cochlear implant through the Johannesburg Cochlear Implant programme was Jorge Moreira who had his implant operation on 18/01/1992. This means that our programme is 20 years old and we want to celebrate!

Don't forget to send in your comments, questions and suggestions and stories! Please share them with us at admin@jcic.co.za or 2711482-6141 and we will include them or reply to them in our next edition.