



Cochlear[®]

Hear now. And always

Chit Chat

**Package for families
with a new deaf baby**





Welcome to Chit Chat

The **Chit Chat** package has been designed for use with families of children who are new to listening.

The **Chit Chat** package contains a:

- Booklet
- Conversation discussion sheets
- Learning to listen sounds words & phrases sheets
- Ling sound sheets
- Fridge-notes
- First words record

Chit Chat is about communicating with your child by simply having fun with everyday activities. Routines, play and trips out all give you and your child lots to talk about, and it's this communication that helps them develop their listening and speaking skills.

Chit Chat aims to show you how to make it easier for your child to listen by making sure that they have the right technology, that it's working properly and that it's being used in the best possible environment so they can hear the sound of your voice clearly.

Chit Chat will also give you ideas to help you use a style of communication that's suitable for the age and development of your child.

Chit Chat will show you how to make all the everyday things you do interesting and engaging. At first this new approach can feel unfamiliar and you may need to work at it but it will soon become second nature.

Chit Chat is all about your child listening, joining in and having fun with communication!

“The first thing that she did that we kind of knew that she was copying us was that she said ‘Ahh’ to her teddy bears and you know it filled us all up, we couldn’t, both me and Steve were just so emotional about the fact that actually she was copying what we were saying.” Parent

What the parents say...

“ We were so thrilled when he started to respond to sound. It did feel a bit daunting at first that we had such a mountain to climb in terms of teaching him to listen and to learn.”

“ Because we didn’t have any deafness in the family it was just totally new to us and we were almost thrown into a world that we had no experience of.”

“ When we’re indoors, I’m kind of quite aware of if I have the kettle on and that’s background noise, radio and TV, that kind of thing. So I’m more aware of cutting out external noises.”

“ When we talk to her we try and get sort of close to her, close to her hearing aid and you do find yourself trying to be clear and concise.”

“ I think you come to the conclusion that if she’s not hearing, she’s going to have a problem speaking and obviously because we spend the most time with her, you do feel that responsibility to give her every chance.”

“ She didn’t really have any language when we first put the implant on, but when you look now it’s twenty-two months on, the difference is unbelievable.”

“ People all have different approaches. We decided that we wanted Jess to be able to talk and hear without having to lip read and without having to sign. So we do spend time getting down to her level to explain things to her.”

“ If it’s a word that I don’t think he’s caught, a new word and he’s not quite pronouncing it correctly, then I’ll go closer to his implant so that he can actually hear pronunciation better.”

“ Normally if we are in a busy shopping centre, normally we go on the side with the cochlear implant and talk to her. It’s very important to go on that side, it’s worse if there’s loads of music or noise around.”

“ We always have quiet time throughout the afternoon where we don’t have radio or TV or anything like that and we really do the one-to-one communication.”

“ If you’re in somewhere like the dining room where there’s a lot of hard surfaces, sound can sort of bounce around the room, so in the lounge where there’s lots of nice soft surfaces, we would more likely do some language work in there with him.”

“ Once it’s been pointed out that you need to wait a long time for an answer, or that you need to lean in close or make sure that she’s listening, then it becomes quite easy to fit in with everyday life. And I think for me that’s just become the way I communicate with my children, both of them, and I think it’s benefited both of them quite a lot.”



Environment and Positioning

There are lots of practical things you can do to help your child develop their listening skills.

First of all you need to make sure that your child's hearing technology – whether it's a hearing aid, cochlear implant or bone anchored hearing system – is working properly; your child will be depending on you to make sure they can hear, as an early listener won't be able to tell you if there's a problem.

You can check this by using your voice e.g. play a game with the Ling sounds to make sure that your child can hear the whole range of different speech sounds (please see the **Chit Chat** handout on the Ling Sounds) or you can use other Learning to Listen Sounds (please see the **Chit Chat** handout on the Learning to Listen Sounds).

As they get older, your child's hearing needs may change and the equipment they use may change too. Your child's hearing technology works using a microphone. The closer you are to the microphone when you speak, the clearer they'll hear.

This is particularly important in noisy situations.

In the early stages, if your child hears better with one ear because of their technology it can help if you are on their best hearing side.

You can help your child develop their listening and understanding skills by improving the environment around them.

In noisy situations it is difficult to hear voices clearly at a distance but when you are closer, it is much easier.

Rooms such as kitchens are noisy places and hard surfaces reflect the sound back making voices less clear. Carpets and soft furnishings help absorb this extra sound making it much easier to understand what is being said. Turning the background noise right down makes all the difference.

In busy family life we sometimes all talk at once, this makes it hard to hear. It is much better when everyone speaks one at a time, so that your child can follow what's happening.

If there are too many conflicting sounds your child will not be able to hear what you say.

It is also worth thinking about how you position yourself with your child as it can have a big impact on how they're hearing. If your child is used to lip reading, it can make a big change if you encourage them to start relying on their hearing.

Sitting next to your child gives him or her the opportunity to listen fully, in a natural, comfortable way. If your child doesn't catch something you say, they'll probably look at you for confirmation.

Your child may need clues that you expect a response to what you say, leaning in and looking expectantly can help – give your child time to listen and respond.

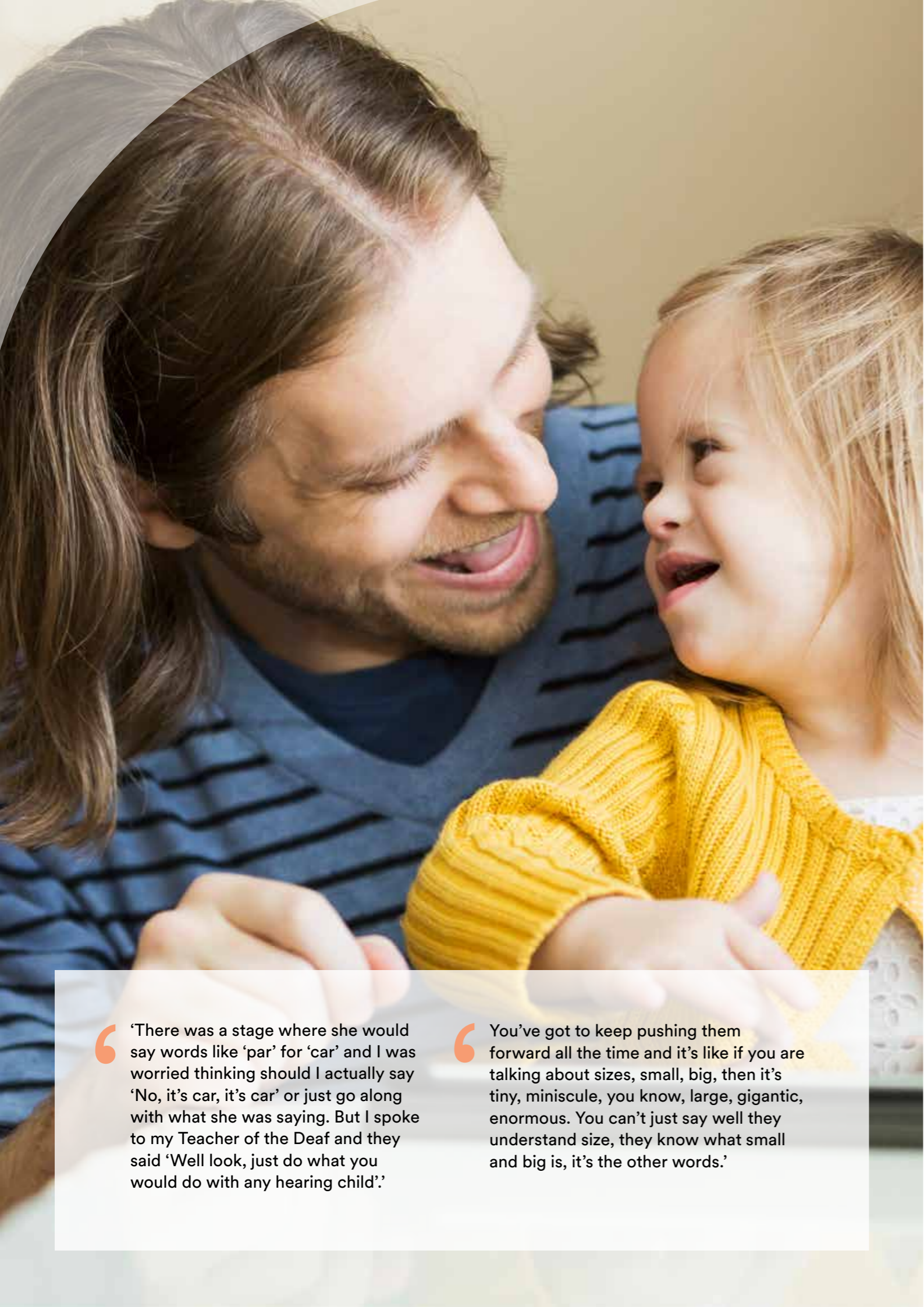
Principles: Environment and Positioning

- Have the correct hearing technology on and working at its best.
- Cut down on background noise to give your child the best possible listening environment.
- It's easier to listen to one person at a time so everyone should take turns in talking.
- Once your child has the correct hear-

- ing technology fitted they'll be able to hear without looking at you, so expect your child to use their listening.
- If you think your child hasn't heard you, ask 'What did you hear?'

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“The things that I did with my other children, you just do with Tay. It's just the fact that you have to go in closer, making sure that she understands. Speak more clearly, you know, be aware, a lot of background noise isn't very good for her so that's the only difference. All the strategies that you have, you do naturally, it's just that I think when you have a child with a disability, you actually think about it more.” Parent



What the parents say...

“ Everything around you, you can make a conversation out of. When you’re baking, you’re getting things out. You’re asking them to go and find things. You know, talking about leaves as you’re walking to school, you’re picking up leaves. What shape it is, what colour it is.’

“ It’s difficult thinking she was almost two years old and she had no speech and no receptive language skills. But I think we always felt confident because she always responded so well to everything we did. So I sort of knew that she would do well, but at the same time was scared in case she didn’t.’

“ We use a lot of repetition, a lot of singing and nursery rhymes and using a sing-songy voice. That seems to help in terms of his understanding and hearing things.’

“ Learning to listen sounds that we started with were animal noises, quack, quack for duck, moo, woof and whenever we had the opportunity through play or when we were out and about we would always point out the animal and make the noise and Alexander responded to that very well. In fact, so well that every time he sees a bird or a duck he’s making quack, quack noises the whole time.’

“ The one bit of advice I would give to anybody going through what we’ve been through is to have perseverance, because when he was switched on, it took many months before we really saw any benefit. But when it did come through we realised that what he was learning and what he was saying, was what we had first persevered with two months before.’

“ There was a stage where she would say words like ‘par’ for ‘car’ and I was worried thinking should I actually say ‘No, it’s car, it’s car’ or just go along with what she was saying. But I spoke to my Teacher of the Deaf and they said ‘Well look, just do what you would do with any hearing child.’”

“ You’ve got to keep pushing them forward all the time and it’s like if you are talking about sizes, small, big, then it’s tiny, miniscule, you know, large, gigantic, enormous. You can’t just say well they understand size, they know what small and big is, it’s the other words.’

Principles: Environment and Positioning

When your child can hear using technology, they need your support to develop their listening and spoken language communication.

With young children, adults naturally speak in a certain way with young children that helps them develop communication skills, but we don't always recognise exactly how we're helping.

Your child may not know the words that go with everyday objects and activities, so have conversations about what's happening. Whatever stages of learning to listen and talk your child is at, you can turn an everyday trip to the shops into an interesting conversation and the whole family can join in.

Children who are new to hearing need the opportunity to begin to enjoy listening to sounds, words and phrases.

Your job is to get them motivated.

If you have a child-friendly and lively way of speaking, this will catch and hold the interest of your child who is learning how to listen.

You can help your child to join in a conversation by encouraging him or her to fill in the missing bits of a familiar phrase e.g. "Ready, steady..... go!", "Put on your socks and your..... shoes."

You can use 'learning to listen' sounds, words and phrases to help your child's listening brain to 'wake up' (please see the **Chit Chat** Learning to Listen Sounds handout). 'Learning to listen' sounds sound interesting and this motivates your child to listen. And they sound very different from each other, so your child starts to recognise and remember what's been said.

There are lots of 'learning to listen' sounds, words and phrases. They are the same simple, fun sounds we all use when talking with very young children. Things like: Sssssh, yum yum, round and round and many others.

But the best way of making sure that sounds, words or phrases begin to be understood is to talk about things that are going on around you, and use the same words and phrases, over and over again.

When your child is interested in something, you can start to develop and extend their understanding by using new words.

“ We do a lot of singing together, so he's learning from that and he's putting together, and he actually enjoys doing that, so that's how I get his attention.” Parent

When you use short phrases, the important word is often at the end, which helps your child latch on to key words. As your child's language becomes more sophisticated, you will find yourself naturally increasing the length and complexity of what you say. And you can motivate your child by asking them to respond to something they can't see.

Having a bit of fun and challenging expectations can prompt your child to think hard about how to communicate their ideas.

These are just a few ideas to help you, but you'll find that playing with sounds and words, talking about the things around you, and repeating information when you need to becomes second nature.

Principles: What you say

- Use a child-friendly sing-song voice and intonation and stress to highlight important words and parts of phrases.
- Give your child the chance to complete familiar phrases by leaving a gap at the end.
- Use 'learning to listen' sounds, words and phrases, which are interesting and cover the whole range of speech sounds.
- Everyday activities are a great opportunity for you and your child to enjoy using spoken language so talk about what's going on and what you're going to do. Your child needs to hear words and phrases many times, so use repetition and rephrasing.

Having a bit of fun and challenging expectations can prompt your child to think hard about how to communicate their ideas.

These are just a few ideas to help you, but you'll find that playing with sounds and words, talking about the things around you, and repeating information when you need to becomes second nature.


What the parents say...

“ We give her quite a lot of language through explaining quite a lot of things. We always give her a reason for you know, we’re doing this because.”

“ You expect him to sort of pick things up really quickly and life’s not like that. You’ve got to sort of let them, give them time.”

“ Anything that happens can be a language opportunity. So before a cup of tea was spilt on the floor. So instead of getting angry, trying to get him to think about how to solve that problem.”

“ We don’t really do anything specific, where I think ‘Right we’re going to sit down and work on this target or on this skill’. I just have to always think how to fit it in with what I’m doing anyway.”



“ We’ve gone from worrying about whether she’ll ever speak, to worrying about exactly how well she’ll do. It doesn’t seem like a problem anymore.” Parent

Responding to the moment

- Use a child-friendly sing-song voice and intonation and stress to highlight important words and parts of phrases.
- Give your child the chance to complete familiar phrases by leaving a gap at the end.
- Use 'learning to listen' sounds, words and phrases, which are interesting and cover the whole range of speech sounds.
- Everyday activities are a great opportunity for you and your child to enjoy using spoken language so talk about what's going on and what you're going to do. Your child needs to hear words and phrases many times, so use repetition and rephrasing.

There are lots of opportunities for conversations about everyday things. Whether you're at home, going out, or simply doing ordinary routines, there's always something to chat about.

Being responsive means being alert to new sounds. Watch to see if your child responds, and then respond yourself. If your child doesn't respond, help them by giving them some cues and give plenty of time to listen and think.

Being responsive also means being open to new language opportunities and making the most of chance to introduce a new word or phrase.

Try and use short, repetitive phrases which use the key word enough times for your child to be sure of it.

Your child also needs as many opportunities as possible to talk for themselves. It's easy for us adults to fill the silence, to try to help them when they don't seem to have the words to say but very often you just need to give them more time. Children need time to process what they've heard, before they can respond.

If your child doesn't respond, you can help them along. Lean in and look interested, so they know you're expecting a response. If they still don't respond, give them a cue. Ask them what they heard. Then, you can tell them to listen because you're going to say it again.

Get used to waiting and the rewards will be there.

When your child comes up with a word or comment, you can add a bit more detail. Your child knows that you're expecting them to speak through your body language and facial expressions. And when your child does respond, you can show you've been listening by repeating. Then you need to respond to what they say. And depending on your child, you may want to expand and develop the idea.

Above all, have fun with your child. Their learning will be an enjoyable and rewarding experience for the whole family.

What the parents say...

“In everyday life we've involved her. We've not thought of it as a burden on ourselves. We've enjoyed things and tried to encourage her to enjoy things. Whatever I do throughout the day, I'm teaching her. She's listening to me. Whether she listens or concentrates or not, I carry on so she's observing me. She hears me and at a later stage, she repeats things.”

“We have to give him time to process all the information that he has. You know, if I'm talking to him, it takes a while to go to his brain and back down and into his mouth, to be able to explain, you know, if he wants a drink, I'm asking him. He'll have to process all of that first.”

“I think the future, there is no limit for Tayahana at the moment. She's doing really, really, really well, so I expect greatness from Tayahana to tell you the truth.”



Responding to the moment

Alert your child to new sounds and talk about them to show that you're interested. You should pause often when talking with your child. This will give them time to listen, think and talk.

When you've said something, lean in and look expectant so that your child gets lots of clues that it's their turn to talk.

Repeat what your child says. It shows you're paying attention and gives them a chance to listen again.

It's really exciting when your child begins to say things for themselves, but don't forget to respond to the things they say.

It's also good to add to what your child says, just a little natural expansion to enhance the conversation.

The **Chit Chat** booklet gives you lots of tips and strategies that you can use to help your child who is new to listening.

However, it's sometimes difficult to remember all these ideas during the "busyness" of everyday life. So, we have produced a range of photocopiable sheets. Some of these sheets are a reminder of the strategies and others offer more ideas and guidance.

You can use the **Chit Chat** sheets in various ways;

- You can stick the fridge-notes on the notice board or on the fridge to show everyone the listening strategies they can use. The "Magic moment..." and "Star quality..." notes are your chance to show off your great skills and your child's progress.
- You can give copies to family, friends and early-years workers who see your child, to remind them of what they need to be doing to help your child with listening.

- You can use the discussion sheets as a rating scale to help you think about how often you are using the techniques recommended. This can be done with the help of your local professionals or other family members.

- The Ling sounds can be used as a very quick daily listening check to make sure the technology is working.

- The Learning to Listen Sounds, Words and Phrases give you a few more ideas but please add your own and remember to have fun conversations about whatever comes up in daily life with your child – it is all about you and your child enjoying a good **Chit Chat**.






“ It’s difficult sometimes to remember to use the techniques. Especially the waiting for an answer, because sometimes you do have to wait a really, really long time and you do think ‘Oh, maybe I’m waiting too long and she’s going to get bored and she’s not going to give me an answer’. But then, normally she will finally come out with something and then you just, you have to kind of have to carry on as though nothing’s happened.” Parent

Hear now. And always

Cochlear is dedicated to helping people with moderate to profound hearing loss experience a world full of hearing. As the global leader in implantable hearing solutions, we have provided more than 700,000 devices and helped 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 next generation technologies. We collaborate with leading clinical, research and support networks to advance hearing science and improve care.

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

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Please seek advice from your health professional about treatments for hearing loss. Outcomes may vary, and your health professional will advise you about the factors which could affect your outcome. Always follow the directions for use. Not all products are available in all countries. Please contact your local Cochlear representative for product information. Views expressed are those of the individual. Consult your health professional to determine if you are a candidate for Cochlear technology.

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