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Cochlear Implants: Therapy techniques and strategies for clinicians and caregivers

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Amanda Singer, MA, CCC-SLP

Learner Objectives

1. List 8 to 10 variables that effect the speech, language and voice success in children who receive cochlear implants
2. Discuss the importance of a Cochlear Implant MAP
3. List and discuss the goals and strategies of a speech pathology program (treatment) for children who receive cochlear implants
4. Discuss the hierarchy of cueing strategies in developing speech and language skills in children who have received cochlear implants
5. List the caregiver responsibilities and strategies in developing speech and language skills in their children. Describe the most important (crucial) strategy a caregiver can use.
Brain and Auditory Development in Infants and Young Children as it relates to Speech and Language Development

Hearing vs. Listening

Hearing:
- Auditory access to the brain

Listening:
- Attending to auditory events with intentionality

“Hearing” must be made available before “listening” can be taught

- Carol Flexer, 1999

The Hearing Brain

- Normal hearing infants
  - Auditory stimulation – 20 weeks gestation
  - Critical speech sound period – 6-8 months
  - Brain plasticity is greatest between 0-3 years of age
- Developmental Synchrony


The Hearing Impaired Brain

- Peripheral hearing loss = central auditory damage
- Earlier implantation
  - Greater auditory capacity
  - Decreases the need for didactic instruction
  - Increases use of incidental learning
- Later implantation
  - Increase in didactic instruction
  - Less likely speech and prosody will be appropriate (after age 5)

Audition and Verbal Language

Appropriate auditory access enables ability to:
- Decode/discriminate sounds of language
- Store sounds in memory
- Attach meaning to the sounds
- Develop understanding of words
- Develop expression of words
- Develop understanding/expression of voice, inflection, rhythm, stress patterns, sentence structure
- Develop literacy skills

With each 10 dB of hearing loss:
- 5.9 month delay in receptive language
- 5.2 month delay in expressive language
- -5 SD points for speech sound production
Language Development Trajectory

Early phonetic skills were predictive of # of words used, sentence complexity, MLU

- Increased native language phonetic skills at 7 months of age demonstrated better language outcomes at 14, 18, 24 months of age
- Non-native language phonetic perception at 7 months was a strong predictor of slower language growth


Speech and Language Development

- Parentese
- Increased use of gaze and visual cues
- Audiovisual speech over auditory only increases incidental learning


Interdisciplinary Cochlear Implant Team Process

Pre-Implant Checklist - SLP

- Review referral materials
- Team meeting
- Speech and Language Evaluation
- Initiate appropriate therapy
- Refer/Consult with outside agencies
- Parent Education
  - Share results
  - Discuss communication options
  - Teach language techniques and strategies
Roles and Expectations

- Speech-Language Pathologist
  - Evaluate
  - Educate
  - Collaborate
  - Acknowledge the grieving process
- Caregiver
  - Learn
  - Collaborate
  - Make final decisions

Speech and Language Evaluations

- Standardized/criterion references on hearing peers
- Test battery chosen is based on the *functional* language level of the child
- Administered in child’s communication mode: oral, sign, total communication
Speech and Language Evaluations

- Birth to three
  - Rossetti Infant Toddler Language Scale
  - MacArthur-Bates Communication Development Inventories (CDI): Words and Gestures
  - MacArthur-Bates Communication Development Inventories (CDI): Words and Sentences
- Preschool: Ages 3-6
  - Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals – Preschool 2
  - Goldman Fristoe Test of Articulation – 3
- School-Aged
  - Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals – 5
  - Goldman Fristoe Test of Articulation – 3

Modified Children’s Implant Profile
ChIP 2000

- Duration of Deafness
- Educational Environment
- Family Structure, Support, Expectations
- Medical/Radiology
- Cognitive Function
- Child Behavior
- Multiple Handicaps
- Speech and Language Skills

Candidacy – ChIP 2000

No Concerns:
- Age appropriate non-verbal communicative intent
- Ability to learn age appropriate language
- Good speech communication attitude

Mild-Moderate Concerns:
- Delay in development of non-verbal communicative intent
- Mild-moderate difficulty language learning
- Language score between 1-2 SD below mean
- Fair speech communication attitude

Great Concerns:
- Severe delay in non-verbal communicative intent
- Severe difficulty learning language
- Language score >2 SD from mean
- Poor speech communication attitude
- Parent expectations

Cochlear Implant MAP

- Ongoing process
- Necessary for auditory, speech, and language development
- SLP monitors:
  - CI usage
  - Articulation
  - Discrimination
  - Nasality in therapy
  - Language progress
- SLP reports concerns to mapping audiologist

Conditioned Response

- Consistent response to visual, tactile, and/or auditory cues
- Hand-over-hand to teach
- Purpose
  - Obtain behavioral audiogram
  - Obtain a more accurate MAP
  - Establish baseline auditory skills
  - Monitor audition daily (LING 6 and/or sound toys)
Variables Affecting Rate of Acquisition

- Etiology
- Duration of deafness
- Degree of hearing loss
- Participation in speech and/or aural rehabilitation therapies
- **Age at implantation**
- Family involvement and home programs
- Social-economic status
- Cognitive status
- Level/type of communication prior to implantation
- Presence of multi-handicapped conditions
- Consistent device use
- Parent responsiveness

Initial Expectations

- Wear device with appropriate settings
- Use body language to indicate when something is heard
- Awareness to voice and environmental sounds
- Increase vocalizations
- Increase eye contact
Behaviors that Indicate Listening

• Eye contact
• Mutual gaze
• Reaching
• Vocalizations or utterances
• Cessation of activity
• Initiation of activity
• Performing actions that demonstrate understanding of the word

Speech and Language Therapy Strategies
Sequence of Skill Expectations

Cochlear implant users:
  • Follow a developmental sequence for acquisition of skills

CI Sequence of Skill Development

  • Startle to loud sounds
  • Awareness of soft environmental sounds
  • Awareness of voice
  • Detect LING 6
  • Increase use of vocal turn taking
  • Detect the main signal from background noise
  • Detect high frequency sounds
  • Use voice to gain attention
  • Discriminate durational differences
  • Respond to name
  • Respond to "no"
  • Establish a conditioned response
CI Sequence of Skill Development

- Imitate inflection with vocal productions
- Demonstrate perception and production of vowels
- Approximation of bilabial sounds
- Imitate correct number of syllables produced by communication partner
- Increase communicative interactions
- Comprehend stress patterns
- Discriminate singing from talking
- Identify environmental sounds
- Identify family members’ voices
- Demonstrate simple word approximations
- **Identify common words/phrases**

CI Sequence of Skill Development

- Associate name with self
- Identify LING 6
- Identify familiar songs/rhymes
- Decrease dependence on sign/gestural support
- Increase complexity of word approximations and high frequency sounds
- Respond appropriately to common verbal commands
- Use word approximations to spontaneously label, request, comment
- Discriminate minimal pair words/phrases with contextual cues
- Rapid growth in comprehension of new words
- Begin incidental learning
- Improve conversational skills
- **Increase expressive vocabulary**
Parent Strategies

Device check

- Caregiver is responsible for operation and maintenance of child’s amplification
- Daily checks
- LING 6
- Encourage consistent use

Parent Strategies

- Daily routines
  - Joint attention (audiovisual)
  - Repetition
- Predictability
  - Allows child to attend to sounds and words
  - Signal the beginning and ending of activities clearly
Parent Strategies

• High achieving 3 year olds have heard 33 million words by age 3, low achieving 11 million
• Typical children hear about 20,000 words a day LENA data
• DBCI study High achieving 3 year old with CHARGE exposed to 5000 words an hour (unpublished data 2011)


Parent Strategies

- Talking to child:
  - Go down to the child’s level
  - Establish eye contact
  - Follow the child’s lead, watch child’s eyes
  - Talk about what child is seeing, touching, doing, hearing, feeling, tasting
  - Use a lot of variation/inflection
  - Be animated, use facial expressions
  - Model sounds
  - Encourage vocal turn taking – PAUSE expectantly
  - Imitate the child’s sounds - give meaning to sounds/words
  - Be pleased and excited about child’s utterances

Parent Strategies

- Talking to child:
  - Talk about the hear and now
  - Repeatedly label names of objects, actions, descriptions
  - Pause for processing time (minimum of 7 seconds)
  - Talk in simple phrases, sentences
  - PAUSE to give child an opportunity to imitate
  - Limit non-specific words (it, that, thing)
  - Use child’s name frequently, meaningfully
  - Use sign language

Parent Strategies – Early CI toddler

- Talking to child: (older)
  - Limit questions with yes/no answers
  - Ask simple questions
  - Ask open-ended questions
  - Provide choices
  - Rich text environment
    - Preschools exposed to more explanatory and narrative talk demonstrated higher listening comprehension
    - Parents using rich text language in conversations was the most significant variable of language in CI users


Most Important Parent Strategies

- Parent’s **responses** to child’s utterances are the most significant variable
  - Imitate
  - Expand on utterances
    - Additional words
    - Grammatical forms
    - information
  - Give child’s sound’s/word approximations meaning
  - Give praise
  - Provide rich text environment


**SpeechPathology.com**

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**Therapy Activities**

**SpeechPathology.com**

**CONTINUED**
Auditory Hierarchy

1. Detection
2. Discrimination
3. Identification
4. Comprehension


Strategies

- Auditory Skills
  - Alert and localize to environmental sounds
  - Use listening cues
  - Variation/inflection in voice
  - Acoustic Hierarchy
  - Acoustic Highlighting
  - Acoustic Tracking
  - Acoustic Sandwich
    - Auditory only – visual (sign, gesture, picture) – auditory only
Acoustic Tracking Video

Detection Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aural Rehabilitation</th>
<th>Speech and Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activity: Listening Walks</td>
<td>Activity: Listening Walks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Experience sounds in child’s environment</td>
<td>• Label objects/actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Make sounds meaningful</td>
<td>• Comment on sound and sensory experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Indicate presence/absence of sounds</td>
<td>• Simple language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Repetitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Vocally and visually interesting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Detection Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aural Rehabilitation</th>
<th>Speech and Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Activity:** Farm Animals  
- Indicate when hear sound  
- Repair strategies:  
  - Repeat  
  - Increase proximity  
  - Vary intonation, pitch, duration  
  - Model the response | **Activity:** Farm Animals  
- Label objects/actions  
- Simple language  
- Repetitive  
- Vocally and visually interesting |

Detection Video
# Discrimination Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aural Rehabilitation</th>
<th>Speech and Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activity: Farm Animals</td>
<td>Activity: Farm Animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Long vs short sounds</td>
<td>• Label objects/actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Moooo vs woof, woof, woo</td>
<td>• Simple language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Long vs short words</td>
<td>• Repetitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Horse vs chicken</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Higher level – Minimal pairs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pig vs tig</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Discrimination Video - Duration**

![Discrimination Video](image)
## Identification Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aural Rehabilitation</th>
<th>Speech and Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activity: Farm Animals</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Choose the animal named&lt;br&gt;• Closed set&lt;br&gt;• Open set</td>
<td><strong>Activity: Farm Animals</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Child labels objects/actions&lt;br&gt;• Pretend play&lt;br&gt;• Tone of voice&lt;br&gt;• Emotions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

### Identification Video – Small closed set

![Identification Video](https://www.speechpathology.com)
Identification Video – Large closed set

Comprehension Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aural Rehabilitation</th>
<th>Speech and Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activity: Farm Animals</td>
<td>Activity: Farm Animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Familiar expressions</td>
<td>• Familiar expressions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Single directions</td>
<td>• Single directions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 2-step directions</td>
<td>• 2-step directions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sequencing critical elements</td>
<td>• Sequencing critical elements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sequencing multi-element directions</td>
<td>• Sequencing multi-element directions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Conversations</td>
<td>• Conversations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Asking questions</td>
<td>• Asking questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Answering questions</td>
<td>• Answering questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Paraphrasing</td>
<td>• Paraphrasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Retelling</td>
<td>• Retelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recalling details</td>
<td>• Recalling details</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**background noise**
Comprehension Video – 2 critical elements

Comprehension Video – 4 critical elements
Comprehension Video – Descriptions

Preschool Activities

Classroom with normal hearing peers (Ages 3-5)

- Predictable routines
- Indicate beginning and end of activity
- Use songs, phrases, questions, pictures, sounds verbal directions, conversation, materials/equipment, language rich environment
- Sabotage routine
- Initiate and expand utterances
Question, Sentence Expansion

Sentence Expansion

SpeechPathology.com
Dialogue

Acoustic highlighting; morphological endings:

- Logan: “You cutting two piece.”
- SLP: “I am cutting two pieces of paper.” One will be a card. We will fold the card in half. What will we do?”

Following Directions (critical elements)

- SLP: “Watch, I’m putting out a big heart, a little heart, a pink heart, a big red heart, a tiny pink heart, a purple heart. Logan listen, I want you to get a big red heart that is between little white hearts.”
- Logan picks up the correct large red heart.
- SLP: “Nice job.”

Dialogue

Sequencing, Rich Text

- SLP: “What do I need to do first?”
- Logan: “Glue it, I will get the glue.”
- SLP: “But what do I need to do first?”
- Logan: “Get all of the fat things off.”
- SLP: “Get all of the fat things off. Yes, I took the old glue off. What do I do next?”

**see Appendix – D for more dialogue**
Preschool & School Age Goals

- Imitation, comprehension, production (contrasted, MLS)
  - Single words
  - Two-word utterances
  - Subject + Verb + Object structure
  - Add descriptors
  - Prepositional phrases
  - Subject + Verb + Object + Prepositional phrases
  - Grammatical morphemes (is, am, s, :s, -ing, -ed)
    -Appending more difficult that stand alone *
  - Experiences to provide meaning


Subject-Verb-Object Matrix

School Age Goals

- Goals vary with language and auditory skills
  - Supersegmental perception
  - Words (syllable number)
  - Phrases
  - Sentences
  - Listen for and use key words
  - Respond to and repeat functional words/sentences
  - Target literacy
7 year old reads

School Age Goals

- Mid/late listeners:
  - Activities of interest/educational level
  - List of key words
  - Vary position in sentences
  - Oral practice
  - Conversation
  - Verb usage
  - Complex language
  - Self-monitor production
  - Conversation thru audition only
  - Communication breakdowns
Language Goals

Past Tense
Speech Production

• Target speech in context of language
• Vowels, consonants
• Syllables, multisyllables, phrases, sentences
• Prosody, stress patterns, pitch, intensity

Voice Production

• Children with bilateral cochlear implants (ages 3-15) had difficulty controlling pitch and loudness
• Similar results indicated for unilateral CI
• Improved with time in sound
• Demonstrates need for early identification and auditory input

Achieving with late BiCl

Cueing Hierarchy Summary

- **AUDITORY**
- Repetition with vocal emphasis (morphemes, articulation)
- Visual (sees you say again)
- Sign, gesture, point, head turn towards item, point, facial expression, touch
- Phonemic (sound of first consonant of word)
- Cloze (complete the sentence)
- Description, association
- Information
- Printed word
- **AUDITORY**
Classroom Adaptations

- Provide preferential seating
- Provide Improved Classroom Acoustics
- Have the child look and listen
- Check comprehension
- Rephrase and restate
- Pre-teach the child
- Encourage classroom participation
- Use visual aids
- Allow/encourage the child to sit at their best listening advantage
- Use auditory recordings
- Phonemic awareness exercises
- Obtain extra help
- Monitor the device and equipment
- Notify parent of behavior changes

Therapy Varies with Devices

- Unilateral cochlear implant
- Cochlear implant and hearing aid
- Sequential bilateral cochlear implant
- Simultaneous cochlear implant
BiCl Sequential Training

- Strategies to work on CI #2 only
  - Highly motivating activities
  - Familiar activities
  - Repetitive activities
  - Initial therapy – auditory/oral (lip reading)
  - First auditory task should be simple and familiar

- Length of training sessions
  - Initial sessions – short segments; several times during a session
  - Home practice – short segments, gradually increasing to one hour a day


Does very early CI lead to better word leaning?

- Early: 6.4-11.8 mos vs Late: 12.2-15.6 mos (N 20)
- Demonstrated better novel word learning when tested at 12-18 months post CI using IPLParadigm and better vocabulary skills
- CI < 1 year leads to better early novel word-learning skills and when tested at 3 to 4 years post CI to significantly better vocabulary, receptive and expressive language skills

Two Students with CIs

Questions or suggestions
Please feel free to contact us

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References


References


References


Appendix A

Language Strategies for Parents Birth to Three

You are welcome to share these handouts with parents
**Language Strategies: 0-6 months**

- Keep baby’s face close when talking
- Direct eye contact with baby’s eyes (follow baby’s eyes)
- Silly sounds with lots of facial expressions
- Vary inflection
- Imitate baby’s sounds
- Talk about activities: feeding, changing, bathing
- Use baby’s name
- Name objects
- Sing to the baby
- Use simple signs
- Minimize background noise

**Language Strategies: 6-12 months**

- Speak close to baby’s face
- Eye level
- Minimize background noise
- Talk about what’s happening
  - Things baby is doing, seeing, hearing, touching, feeling, tasting
- Name objects/actions
- Repetition
- Narrate daily routines
- Short sentences
- Variation in voice
Language Strategies: 6-12 months

• Stress important words
  • “You want UP”
  • “Here’s MORE cereal”
  • “Ball. Here comes the BALL”

• Encourage vocalization
• Inflection – make voice interesting
• Use simple signs
• Look at books and help child point to pictures that you name
• Investigate sounds: running water, toys that make music or loud noises, telephone ringing, dog barking

Language Strategies: 6-12 months

• Take turns making sounds
  • Pause with expectant face
  • Wait for baby to make sounds
  • When baby stops, reinforce their productions by imitating the infant’s sounds
  • Smile/be pleased when infant uses voice
• Respond to baby’s movements, gestures, and facial expressions to reinforce early attempts at communication
**Language Strategies: 6-12 months**

- Play social games (peek-a-book, pat-a-cake)
- Sing songs/rhymes
- Make up own songs about daily routines
  - Bath: “This is the way we wash our face”
  - Pause to allow baby to imitate
- Play language games
  - “where’s your nose?”
  - Hide toys and play “where’s the….“
- Imitate routines through play
  - Kiss the baby, pat the bear, feed the baby, hug the bear

**Language Strategies: 1-3 years**

- Get child’s attention
- Get of child’s level (follow child’s eye, follow child’s lead)
- Talk about the here and now
- Label objects and actions repeatedly
- Pause so the child can imitate
- Talk about what the child is doing: parallel talk
- Talk about what you are doing: self talk
- Imitate and then expand on what the child says
- Model answers by providing choices when asked a question
  (“do you want a cookie or cracker”; “truck or ball”; “doll or bottle”)
Language Strategies: 1-3 years

- Bring objects near your mouth to increase awareness of speech reading cues and encourage eye contact
- Use sign for clarification and further language development
- Encourage requesting - place desired items out of reach
- Make meaningful responses to child’s utterances
- Ask child meaningful questions and open ended questions
- Require child’s language to be at appropriate levels of production
- Look at books
  - Predictable books
  - Label objects and actions
  - Let child “read”/fill in familiar parts
  - Goal: 10 books per day

Appendix - B

What to Look for in a Speech-Language Pathologist/Aural Rehabilitation Audiologist
Professional Qualities

- Certification of Clinical Competence – ASHA
- Licensed by state board
- Experience with:
  - family centered therapy
  - birth-three
  - Hearing impaired infants/toddlers with CI
  - School aged students with CI
- Familiarity with audiogram and how it relates to speech and language development
- Participates in collaboration with pediatrician, audiologist, early intervention provider, social worker, and other therapies

Professional Qualities

- Familiarity with mode of amplification
  - Hearing aid, FM system, cochlear implant
- Ability to complete daily hearing aid checks
- Familiarity with and the ability to explain the communication options
- Willingness to provide therapy using parent’s preferred mode of communication
- Understanding of and ability to explain the different sign options and relationship to English (ASL, SEE, CASE, etc)
- Confidence to question the effectiveness of a chosen mode of communication and to provide alternatives toward the desired outcome
- Teletherapy for families who live far from CI center
Appendix – C

Cochlear Implant Resources

AG Bell
http://www.agbell.org/
Cochlear Americas
http://www.cochlear.com/wps/wcm/connect/us/home
Advanced Bionics
http://www.advancedbionics.com/
Med-El
http://www.medel.com/us/?gclid=Cj0KEQiwzZe8BRDguN3cmOr4_dgBEiQAjjVFmwwMQjFpconomiaXnxzcM0Kw6aPuB9C6dGqZWUNUHuQaArRh8P8HAQ
Appendix – D

Dialogue of Therapy Activity
Targeting Imitation, Expansion, Directions, & Acoustic Highlighting

Dialogue from therapy session

- Child at table, stomping his feet
- Logan: "You hear my shoes?"
- SLP: "I do hear your shoes. What are your shoes doing?"
- Logan: "Stomping under the table."
- SLP: "They certainly are stomping under the table. Your shoes are loud."
- SLP takes out construction paper
- Logan: "What are you going to make this?"
- SLP: "We are folding the paper. What are we doing?"
- Logan: "Folding the paper."
- SLP: "We are making a crease. Now I am cutting the crease."
- Logan: "You cutting two piece."
- SLP: "I am cutting two pieces of paper. One will be a card. We will fold the card in half. What will we do?"
- Logan: "Fold a half."
- SLP: "Fold the paper in half and make another crease. What are we doing?"
- Logan: "Making another crease."
- SLP: "Yes, making another crease so there will be a fold in the paper."
Dialogue

- SLP: "I'm putting the hearts in a line."
- Logan: "You make it for me?"
- SLP: "No, you're going to make a card for your mommy or daddyl"
- SLP: "Watch, I'm putting out a big heart, a little heart, a pink heart, a big red heart, a tiny pink heart, a purple heart. Logan listen, I want you to get a big red heart that is between little white hearts."
- Logan picks up the correct large red heart.
- SLP: "Nice job."
- Logan: "Put glue on it"
- SLP: "What do I need to do first?"
- Logan: "Glue it, I will get the glue."
- SLP: "But what do I need to do first?"
- Logan: "Get all of the fat things off."
- SLP: "Get all of the fat things off. Yes, I took the old glue off. What do I do next?"
- Logan: "Get the glooper thing off!"
- SLP: "Glooper thing off. I took the glooper thing off and threw it in the trash. We need to OPEN the glue. Logan listen. Put some glue on the top and the bottom of the red heart."

Dialogue

- Logan: "Why?"
- SLP: "Why, so that the heart will stay on your paper card."
- Logan: "Is it sticking."
- SLP: "Is the red heart sticking, check it?"
- Logan: "Yeah, it can't get off."
- SLP: "Yes, the red heart IS sticking. We can't get the heart off anymore. The glue is drying."
- SLP: "Logan listen, get the big purple heart! (Logan reaches before the direction is finished) "Listen; Get the big purple heart that is between two tiny pink hearts."
- Logan: "OK!"