



CHIRRP

Consortium for Hearing,
Imbalance, Rehabilitation
and Research in Pediatrics

CHIRRP is a multidisciplinary pediatric consortium dedicated to improving the lives of children with auditory and vestibular disorders.

From the delicate structures of the inner ear to the complex processing centers of the brain, CHIRP brings together experts in audiology, otolaryngology, neurology, rehabilitation, and allied health to focus on the diagnosis, management, and rehabilitation of auditory and vestibular disorders.

Our goal is to optimize clinical care, standardize diagnostic practices, and accelerate impactful research for children with hearing and balance disorders—whether congenital, acquired, syndromic, or treatment-related.

CHIRRP is committed to identifying and addressing pathology at any level of the auditory and vestibular system, including complex cases involving neurologic, oncologic, and developmental comorbidities.

Structure & Leadership

CHIRRP is co-directed by Dr. Thierry Morlet, PhD and Dr. Celine Richard, MD, PhD who bring together deep expertise in audiology, neuroscience, and pediatric rehabilitation.

The consortium integrates coordinated care and research efforts across:

- The School of Communication Sciences and Disorders, the Center for Research Initiatives and Strategies for the Communicatively Impaired and the Memphis Speech and Hearing Center at the University of Memphis (UofM).
- The Otolaryngology, Audiology, Speech-Language Pathology and Physical Therapy departments at Le Bonheur Children's Hospital (LBCH).
- The University of Tennessee Health Science Center Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery.
- The Ear, Nose and Throat /Otolaryngology Clinic at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Participating departments and specialties include a wide range of allied health professionals. This integration ensures a seamless continuum of care and multidisciplinary input from initial diagnosis through long-term rehabilitation.

As part of its foundational phase, CHIRRP will launch with a PhD student jointly funded by UTHSC, St. Jude and the University of Memphis, supporting cross-institutional research initiatives and the development of standardized protocols for clinical data collection and assessment. It represents a dynamic multisite training opportunity.

During that foundational phase, we will launch research studies and develop a rigorous timely plan to secure external funding to grow the consortium and add grant funded members. We will create educational initiatives, for both health care professionals and families and create a family advisory council to better support patients and families. The Council will serve to promote high quality and compassionate care through strong communication and collaboration between healthcare providers, patients and their caregivers as well as educators.

Vision

To ensure that every child affected by auditory and vestibular system disorders—regardless of origin—receives timely, precise diagnosis, individualized care, and the opportunity to thrive in all aspects of development.

Mission

To unify clinical expertise, translational neuroscience research, and family-centered care in order to improve outcomes for children with hearing and balance disorders through collaborative innovation, research excellence, and equitable access to care.

Core Goals

1. Comprehensive Identification

Develop and implement advanced tools for detecting dysfunction at any level of the auditory and vestibular systems—including the cochlea, peripheral nerves, brainstem, and cortical centers.

2. Integrated, Evidence-Based Care

Deliver personalized, multidisciplinary interventions based on the latest clinical evidence, tailored to each child's developmental and medical context.

3. Family-Centered Support

Equip families with the knowledge, tools, and advocacy resources they need to engage confidently in their child's care journey.

4. Collaborative Research & Data Integration

Drive multicenter research efforts and build a shared data platform that supports innovation, outcome tracking, and continuous improvement in pediatric auditory health.

5. Continuing formation (CMEs, CEUs), adherence to national and international guidelines.

CHIRRP 5-Year Growth Plan (2026–2030)

Year 1: Foundation & Visibility

Objectives

- Establish internal structure, governance, and communication channels.
- Launch initial research and training initiatives.
- Build public and professional awareness of CHIRRP.

Key Actions

- Formalize consortium governance with advisory and executive committees.
- Recruit and support the inaugural joint PhD student (UofM, UTHSC, St. Jude).
- Develop standardized protocols for clinical data collection and assessment.
- Create the CHIRRP brand identity, website, and digital presence.
- Form a Family Advisory Council to guide patient- and caregiver-centered initiatives.
- Initiate one or two small collaborative pilot research studies.

Years 2-3: Expansion of Research & Education

Objectives

- Broaden research collaborations across sites.
- Develop training opportunities for students, residents, and fellows.
- Build educational initiatives for families and clinicians.

Key Actions

- Apply for seed grants and institutional pilot funding.
- Launch a quarterly CHIRRP seminar/webinar series for knowledge exchange.
- Initiate multicenter data-sharing pilot across member institutions.
- Develop patient- and family-focused educational workshops (in person and virtual).
- Recruit additional graduate trainees and postdoctoral fellows.

Years 4-5: Funding & Multicenter Infrastructure

Objectives

- Secure major external funding to scale research and clinical integration.
- Advance translational research and advocacy.
- Build a robust, shared research and clinical database.
- Enhance interdisciplinary clinical pathways.
- Position CHIRRP as a national leader in pediatric auditory and vestibular disorders.
- Ensure financial, academic, and clinical sustainability.
- Scale patient and family impact.

Key Actions

- Submit NIH, PCORI, and foundation-level grant applications for multicenter studies.
 - Expand standardized data platform to all consortium sites.
 - Develop care pathways for specific high-impact pediatric conditions (e.g., cancer-related ototoxicity, congenital vestibular disorders).
 - Host first **CHIRRP Annual Symposium** bringing together clinicians, researchers, and families.
 - Formalize partnerships with other pediatric hospitals/academic centers.
 - Launch multicenter clinical trials and outcome studies.
 - Publish family- and clinician-focused toolkits for standardized care.
 - Expand training pipeline: fellowships, cross-institutional rotations, continuing medical education programs.
 - Advocate for pediatric auditory/vestibular health at state and national policy levels.
 - Secure multi-year program/project grants.
 - Establish an endowment or philanthropic fund for CHIRRP sustainability.
 - Create an international collaboration hub for pediatric auditory/vestibular research.
 - Publish multicenter clinical trial results and guidelines.
 - Develop digital patient/family support resources accessible globally.
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