



Hearing in Infants & Young Children: A Guide for Families



Maine Newborn Hearing Program

The Maine Newborn Hearing Program provides information to families about hearing screening, follow-up evaluations, and early intervention and family support services. Hospitals in Maine perform newborn hearing screenings at birth. If the hospital cannot perform the hearing screening, they must help you arrange to have the screening done at a later time. If your baby was not born at a Maine hospital, ask your baby's health care provider about hearing screening or contact the Maine Newborn Hearing Program for more information.

Why is it important to test my baby's hearing?

It is important to know about any hearing loss as soon as possible, as this will allow providers to give a child the special help needed for language and social development.

Hearing loss is the most commonly occurring disorder in infants in the US and affects as many as 1 to 3 out of 1,000 babies born each year. Without formal testing, it is not always possible to know if a child has hearing loss just by interacting with them.

The first two years of a child's life are critical for speech and language development. Studies show that before Universal Newborn Hearing Screening, most children with hearing loss were not identified until they were over two years old. By that age, most hearing children understand a great deal of spoken language, and many have started to talk.

How is the hearing screening done, how long does it take, and does it hurt my baby?

Soft sounds are presented to your baby's ears through earphones or other listening devices. Electrodes that look like stickers are placed on your baby's head. The electrodes pick up the response to those sounds. The result is given as either PASS or REFER. This screening is done when your baby is asleep or quiet and can take as little as 15 minutes. It does not hurt your baby.

What does PASS or REFER mean?

If your baby has a PASS result, it suggests that your baby's hearing was normal at the time of the screening. If your baby has a REFER result, your baby needs to have a follow-up test. This is not unusual. Some things can interfere with screening, such as birth fluid in the ear canal or noise in the testing area. A REFER result may also mean that your baby has a hearing loss. If your baby needs a follow-up test, appointment details will be shared by the hospital staff on page 7 of this booklet, or by your baby's primary care provider.

What are the signs of a hearing loss and what can I do for my baby?

The result of the hearing screening shows how your baby was hearing on that day. As a parent, you know your baby best, and you will want to monitor your baby's hearing and speech as they grow. Some tips can be found on the next two pages. Save this booklet to help you observe your baby's hearing through age two. If you have a concern about your baby's hearing at any time, talk to your baby's primary care provider.

Your Baby Should

You Should

Age Range	Your Baby Should	You Should	Age Range
Birth to 3 mo	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Startle to a sudden loud noise.● Soothe or calm to your voice.● Squeal, coo, laugh.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Whenever your baby makes sounds, positively reinforce their attempts by imitating them.● Hold your baby close to you. Rock them, sing, talk quietly, and read to them.● Talk to your baby using their name while you work around the house.	Birth to 3 mo
3–6 mo	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Turn head or move eyes to find a familiar voice.● Play at making noises and sounds.● Like sound-making toys.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Listen to and imitate your baby's sounds. Be sure to give your baby time to respond.	3–9 mo
6–9 mo	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Respond to their own name.● Begin to understand common words like "no," and "bye-bye."● Imitate speech by making sounds like coughing, clicking tongue, or smacking lips.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Hold your baby close to you. Sing, tell stories, and talk about toys and other items in your house.● Play games like "Peek-a-boo" or "Pat-a-cake."	3–9 mo
9–12 mo	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Repeat simple words and sounds that you make.● Point or reach for familiar objects when asked.● Respond differently to happy or angry talking.● Follow simple directions.● Understand about 50 words	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Make simple speech sounds to see if your baby imitates (bah-bah, gah-gah).● Pay attention to see if your baby says "Mama" or "Dada."● Talk with your baby about his or her toys and items in your house. Play singing games.● Point to pictures in their books and talk about them.	9–12 mo
12–18 mo	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Bounce to music.● Talk in what sounds like sentences, with a few understandable words.● Identify people, body parts, and toys.● Enjoy listening to stories read aloud.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Show your baby their body parts, "Here's baby's nose, eye, ear," etc.● Show simple picture books, help turn the pages, talk about the pictures.● Play: "Where's Daddy? (Mommy?)" and point to Daddy (Mommy). "Where's the doggy? (or a toy)," "What does the doggy say? Bow-wow."	12–18 mo
18–24 mo	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Understand you when you call from another room.● Point to body parts when asked.● Begin to speak in two-word combinations, such as "Mommy, more!"● Prefer certain books and bring them to you.● Understand 250-500 words (by 24 months)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Read simple stories to your child and ask questions "Where's the kitty?" and point out the picture.● Give instructions, "Put the doll on the chair," "Put the ball in the box."	18–24 mo

Statewide Resources

Child Development Services (CDS) is the Lead Agency in the state of Maine that is responsible for providing Early Intervention (birth-2 years) and Special Education and Related Services (ages 3-5) per the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) under the supervision of the Maine Department of Education. Early Intervention is provided under Part C of IDEA using evidence-based services in the natural environment for infants and toddlers with developmental delays and disabilities and their families. The Early Intervention Team from the regional CDS site supports the family and other primary caregivers in increasing the child's engagement, independence, and social relationships within the context of everyday routines and activities. Special Education and Related Services are provided under Part B of IDEA and ensures that identified children receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Services are provided at no cost to the family.

Central Office, Augusta
207-624-6660

Child Development Services
146 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Early Intervention and Family Services (EIFS), a department of the Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MECDHH), focuses on supporting families with children who are deaf or hard of hearing or have a suspected hearing loss. In collaboration with CDS, EIFS supports families and professionals statewide to ensure optimal services for children who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families. EIFS provides comprehensive, unbiased information to support families in making informed decisions that match their values and priorities, and ensure supports are in place to help meet the family's goals. EIFS is available to families of deaf or hard of hearing children from birth until their third birthday. Services are provided at no cost to the family.

1-866-231-8910 or
207-781-6335 (Voice)

Early Intervention and Family Services
1 Mackworth Island
Falmouth, ME 04105

The Maine Newborn Hearing Program (MNHP) is part of the Maine CDC, Department of Health and Human Services. The MNHP coordinates newborn hearing screening programs and follow-up evaluations for infants who did not pass the hearing screening or require further testing and is available to families and professionals for resource and referral information. Services are provided at no cost to the family. For more information contact:

207-287-8427 or
1-800-698-3624 (Voice)
Maine relay: call 711

Maine Newborn Hearing Program
Key Bank Plaza, 7th Floor
286 Water Street Augusta, ME 04333-0011

Your baby's newborn hearing screening results:

Date of hearing screening: _____

- Passed;** no further testing needed at this time
- Passed with Risk Factors;** further testing is needed, see below for follow-up appointment information
- Did Not Pass;** further testing needed, see below for follow-up appointment information
- Hearing screening was not completed;** see below for follow-up appointment information
- Reason screening was not completed:**

An appointment has been scheduled for your baby for a:

- Hearing screening**
- Follow-up evaluation**

Date: _____ Time: _____

Provider (Hospital Nursery, Audiologist):

Address:

If you need to reschedule, please call:

Or email, text, or contact via website:



If you have any questions, please call:

Maine CDC Newborn Hearing Program

207-287-5357 (V) or 1-800-698-3624 (V)

Maine Relay: **call 711**

Or visit our website:

<https://bit.ly/cdc-mnhp>

To order additional copies of this publication:

<https://bit.ly/order-screening-brochure>

To see a version on the web, please scan this code:



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