


A Parent's Guide to Hearing Aids



Why are hearing aids recommended for young children?

 If your family's goal is spoken language development, early and consistent use of hearing aids can give them the best chance at reaching that goal.

- Children are sponges! They learn to speak by accessing/hearing all of the sounds of language around them. They hear people talking directly to them, and they overhear conversations from a short distance. This ability to overhear is critical for developing speech and language.
- Hearing aids provide your child with improved access to the sounds of spoken language, both direct, and overheard.



Children who are hard of hearing or deaf have limited access to the sounds of spoken language. Limited exposure to language can result in delays in language development and social skills. Hearing aids are one way to improve access to language. Other ways to provide access to language include visual modalities, such as American Sign Language.

Children whose families chose a visual modality for communication may use hearing aids to support access to sounds in their environment.

How will hearing aids be fit to my child?



Your audiologist will work with you and your child to select hearing aids that work best for your child.

- The aids will be custom fit to your child's ear and to their hearing levels.
- Your child's hearing aids will be programmed by your audiologist to make the important sounds of speech as accessible as possible to your child.
- Regular follow up visits are important to ensure proper fit and function of the aids, and to make sure your child has consistent access to the sounds of spoken language.

What should I expect?



Hearing aids make sounds louder to give your child improved access. The aids do not restore "typical" hearing.

- Even with appropriately fit hearing aids, most children will be unable to access some parts of spoken language and certain sounds in their environment.
- Your child's success is dependent on a combination of their hearing aids, support from your family, intervention services, and their school.
- If your child's hearing changes, their hearing aids can be changed too. Same goes for growth spurts—new earmolds can be made to better fit your child's growing ears!



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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



Can I go to any local audiologist?

- When you call to make an appointment, you should ask to see an audiologist who is experienced with pediatric hearing aids.



How much does my child need to wear their hearing aids?

- Families are encouraged to provide access to hearing aids as much as possible throughout the day, with the understanding that some activities (naps, baths, swimming, playing outside in the rain, etc.) may prevent hearing aid use. Taking short breaks from their hearing aids is also okay!
- Hearing aid use is important if the goal is to encourage spoken language development. When using hearing aids, your child may have better access to new vocabulary and the conversations happening around them. Learning does not end at school; children benefit greatly from overhearing conversations in the car, at the playground, and at home.
- If you have questions, ask your audiologist about strategies to help your child and your family adjust to consistent use of hearing aids.



What can I do to help my child?

- Give them as many examples of language as possible: read to your child, sing to them, and narrate what you are doing as you go about your day.
- Make sure you check the proper function of their hearing aids often. Your audiologist will show you how.
- Become a strong advocate for your child's communication needs at home and at school.
- Consistently engage in intervention services, educational supports, and follow-up visits with your audiologist.



Find more resources from Earliest Interactions:

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