

# Elements to Consider When Purchasing OAE Equipment

A variety of OAE equipment options exist from different manufacturers. It is important to note that not all OAE equipment has been designed to be equally effective for use with 0-3 year olds in early childhood educational settings. Carefully review the equipment selection criteria below:

## Portability

- Is the equipment handheld with no loose parts?
- Does the equipment come with a carrying case that allows the equipment to be easily packed and unpacked to minimize cord damage and the need to disconnect the probe from the screening unit?

## Capability

- Does the equipment screen quickly? (Average time of 2 minutes or less per ear on a cooperative child.)
- Can the equipment run on either battery or on direct connection to a power source?
- How long does the battery maintain a charge? (Should hold a charge for 3 hours of testing or be able to perform 50-100 tests before needing to be recharged.)
- How long does it take the battery to charge? (Should fully charge in 3 hours or less.)
- Is the equipment simple, featuring only the essential capabilities you need for your OAE screening program? (For example, some equipment can be used to do diagnostic testing or automated auditory brainstem response [AABR] screening. This would be beyond the scope of your screening program and you would most likely be paying for capabilities you would not need. Likewise the equipment may have a printer and/or other data management cabling capabilities. Thoughtfully consider which additional components will be useful to you and which will add cost but not significant convenience.)

## Ease of Use

- Is the equipment easy to turn on and use right way?
- Does the display allow you to quickly begin, stop and restart tests?
- Does the display tell you if the probe fit is good, poor or if there is too much noise?
- Does the display show you how a test is progressing?

## Probe

- Is the probe easy to clean and service?
- Is the probe easy to place in the ear?
- How well does the probe stay in place when the child moves?
- Is the cord length from the machine to the probe long enough (48" or longer)?
- Does the probe cord have a "clip" that will allow you to attach the cord to the child's clothing, thus keeping the cord weight from pulling the probe from the child's ear, and leaving the screener's hands free to run the equipment and work with the child?
- Does the probe come with a wide selection of probe tip covers for all ages of children and adults?
- Are the probes and probe covers designed to minimize the occurrence of wax or debris plugging the probe openings?

## Manufacturer Support

- ❑ Will the manufacturer and/or distributor allow you to use the machine on a trial basis prior to purchase?
- ❑ Will the distributor provide “hands-on” in-service, and any follow-up visits if needed, as part of the purchase?
- ❑ Is the manufacturer’s warranty satisfactory?
- ❑ Does the distributor provide a service contract that provides quick, reliable repair and includes loaner equipment if the equipment must be returned to the manufacturer for more extensive repair?
- ❑ Does the equipment come with sufficient training materials such as a training video, user’s guide and quick reference sheet?
- ❑ Are software upgrades provided when released?

## Purchase and Maintenance Costs

- ❑ Is the equipment affordable? (Should cost no more than \$3,500 to \$4,000.)
- ❑ Are the probe covers (tips) reasonably priced?
- ❑ Is a second probe, or a replacement microphone (the most expensive part of the equipment), included in the purchase price? (What is the cost of a replacement probe or microphone?)
- ❑ Is annual calibration of the equipment affordable and convenient?
- ❑ Is it possible to quickly check calibration on the machine (on site check)?
- ❑ Are software upgrades included in the purchase price? (If not, what is the estimated cost for software upgrades?)