

Information for Teachers

We will be coming to complete hearing screenings on children in your class. The following describes the hearing screening process and explains how you can facilitate this in an efficient manner.

The Hearing Screening Procedure

The procedure we will be using is called Otoacoustic Emissions or OAE Testing. This is the same procedure used in many hospitals across the country to screen newborns. It is a highly reliable hearing screening method that will help us identify a wide range of hearing health needs, including middle ear disorders (infections) or permanent hearing loss that we otherwise might not know about. These conditions can have a significant negative impact on the social, educational and developmental progress of a child when left unaddressed.

If a child does not pass the screening we will repeat it again with a two-week period. If the child still does not pass, the child will be referred to a primary care provider for initial treatment and to an audiologist for a complete evaluation when necessary. **NOTE: If a child does not pass a hearing screening, this does NOT necessarily mean they have a serious hearing health need. Rather, it means that a complete evaluation is necessary.** Any child referred to a health care provider will also need to be rescreened once the health care provider tells us the middle ear is clear and healthy. Our screening looks at the inner ear and goes beyond what most health care providers examine.

What you need to know about OAE hearing screening:

- It involves a tiny sound transmitter/microphone being placed in the child's ear from which the child will hear a clicking or musical tone.
- Does not require the child to respond to the sounds in any way, except to be quiet.
- Will be painless for the child.
- Will take about 3-5 minutes per child.
- Must be done in a relatively quiet environment, but silence is not required.
- May be done while the child is sleeping.

Teachers may facilitate the screening process by:

- Preparing the children for screening by playing a little game in which the children pretend to listen to the sound of a bird or other animal coming from a small toy, or even the teacher's hand. (The game should NOT involve actually placing anything in the child's ear canal.) It is best if the teacher avoids introducing the screening activity by stating anything like, "You are going to have your hearing tested," which is likely to make children feel nervous. It is much better for teachers to **tell children that they will each have a chance to "play a listening game."** Having rewards such as stickers available after the screening can also be a good idea.
- Recommending an especially cooperative child as the first to be screened, one who can model cooperative behavior during screening for other children.
- Designating a specific area in the room where screening will take place and where something special is set up for the children that will encourage them to sit quietly.
- Occupying the children's hands and attention during the screening process, helping to hold the child, and finding ways to soothe them if they are distressed during the procedure. Having quiet toys available for the children can be very effective.