Does Your Child Have a Unilateral Hearing Loss?
Services for Children with Unilateral Hearing Loss

Until recently, children with unilateral hearing loss did not have their hearing loss detected until they were in school. Now, with the advent of newborn hearing screening, we are detecting the presence of a unilateral hearing loss during the first year of life. A review of the literature indicates that children with unilateral hearing loss may be at risk for speech and language delays and/or other academic challenges. We don’t know, however, which children are at risk. We also do not know at precisely what age the unilateral hearing loss has an impact.

A research team in the Department of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences at the University of Colorado-Boulder conducted a pilot project to collect information about the development of children with unilateral hearing loss. Results from this project show that 27% of children with unilateral hearing loss had language delays.

The Colorado Home Intervention Program (CHIP) offers consultation to families of children with a unilateral hearing loss until that child reaches 3 years of age. As part of the consultative service, we suggest parents participate in an evaluation of the child’s development. In this way, we can detect if and when the hearing loss affects the child’s development.

In order to assess and monitor the development of children with unilateral hearing loss, the University of Colorado-Boulder research team has developed a screening protocol that is completed by the family every 6 months starting when the child is 15 months of age. This developmental screen is based on parent-completed protocols.

Frequently Asked Questions

What do the developmental screening tests measure?
Language, communication, and speech skills are reported.

How are the results shared with the family?
The results are summarized and shared with family members and with the local Colorado Hearing Resource (CO-Hear) Coordinator. The results are explained in writing. If the family has questions about the results, they may contact their CO-Hear. If the results suggest there is a developmental delay, the CO-Hear will contact the family to discuss service and treatment options.

Who pays for the cost of the evaluation?
Different agencies are paying for the evaluation: The Colorado Home Intervention Program (CHIP) and The Colorado Department of Education. There is no cost to the family.

How does the family benefit?
The family will obtain a developmental profile of their child, which is based on norms established for all children. Based on this assessment, the family can ask questions about the development of their child. They can also request consultative services.
For more information

Contact your local Colorado Hearing Resources (CO-Hear) Coordinator. The number for this coordinator is available by calling the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB) or your local Early Childhood Connections Program. You may also call the director of the Colorado Home Intervention Program (CHIP):

Arlene Stredler Brown
Director, Early Education Programs
Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind
University of Colorado at Boulder
SLHS – C.B. 409
Boulder, CO 80309-0409
303-492-3037
303-492-3274 (fax)
arlene.brown@colorado.edu