

finding out
about your
baby's hearing



early hearing
detection &
intervention

Florida Department of Health



A baby begins hearing before birth.

Congratulations on the birth of your baby!

It is important that all newborns have a hearing screening. Babies who do not have appropriate responses for one or both ears or who have been discharged before hearing screening is completed are referred for further hearing testing.

Tests used for newborn hearing screening are quite accurate at identifying hearing problems. There are many reasons why a baby may not pass a newborn hearing screening, including:

- baby was discharged before screening could be completed
- fluid was in the ears from birth process
- baby was awake during screening and movement caused an inaccurate result

If a baby doesn't pass, he or she usually is rescreened before leaving the hospital. If the baby still doesn't pass, then the baby is referred for further hearing testing.

Remember, even if a baby does not pass hearing screening he or she still can have normal hearing. However, hearing testing is necessary to determine hearing ability in both ears.

Even babies that pass hearing screening can develop a hearing loss for a variety of reasons. Be sure to keep baby away from loud noise or music to prevent hearing damage.

Where do I go for further hearing testing?

A pediatric audiologist can do follow-up hearing testing to learn more about your baby's hearing. The hospital or your physician may be able to refer you to an audiologist with experience testing tiny babies (or you can contact the phone number listed below for a local list). It is important for follow-up testing to be done within one month of your baby's discharge from the hospital after birth.

Should I be worried about my baby's hearing?

It cannot be assumed that your baby has normal hearing unless his or her hearing is tested. Hearing loss is the most common birth defect, but it still is relatively rare to identify a baby with hearing loss. Most babies will pass hearing screening. However, if members of your family developed permanent hearing loss as children or young adults, your child may have a greater chance of having a hearing loss. Only about 3 out of every 1,000 babies will have a long-term hearing loss that can impact development. Most of these families will have two normal hearing parents and have no reason to suspect their babies could have a hearing loss.

The earlier a child with hearing loss is identified, the more quickly intervention can begin to reduce the likelihood of delays in speech and language development

If you have a concern that your child's speech or hearing behavior is not developing normally, contact your child's doctor about having your child's hearing tested by an audiologist.

What if my baby has a hearing loss?

There is help! Children's Medical Services Infants & Toddlers Early Intervention Program has trained people across the state to provide support, information and understanding to caregivers as they learn about their child's hearing loss. These local Serving Hearing Impaired Newborns Effectively (SHINE) personnel can assist and guide families as they help their children learn and develop. Early intervention services are available at no charge to parents through the local Infants & Toddlers Early Intervention Program.

Hearing can be tested reliably at all ages—don't wait.

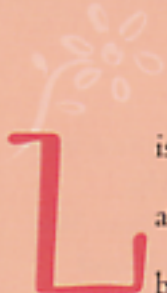
Only further testing will tell which babies have hearing loss.

Special equipment is required to evaluate the hearing of babies.

Remember, not all hearing loss occurs at birth.

It's never too early to check your baby's hearing.


For more information regarding your baby's hearing, please call your primary health care provider or contact:
Children's Medical Services; 4052 Bald Cypress Way, A06; Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1707; 850-245-4200



Listening to Mom and Dad and all the sounds around them gives babies the experiences needed to begin to understand the meaning and importance of the rhythm and sounds of speech. Babies will listen and babble for about a year before they begin to say real words.

Typically, unidentified hearing loss will interfere with developing speech, language, and social skills. **Allow your baby the best opportunity to develop—make sure he or she has good hearing!**

If your baby was referred after hearing screening, see an audiologist for a hearing evaluation. It is best to identify and begin to manage any possible hearing problems **BEFORE** your baby is one month old.



Florida Law 383.145 requires hearing screening of all newborns, preferably prior to hospital discharge but within the first 30 days of life.

The purpose of identifying newborns with hearing loss is to prevent or minimize the effects of hearing loss on language development, academic performance, and cognitive development through appropriate early intervention services.

The law further requires that Medicaid, HMOs, and health insurance companies cover initial hearing screening, follow-up, and medically necessary reevaluations leading to diagnosis of normal or impaired hearing. If medically related procedures are required, private health insurance companies and HMOs, as well as public programs such as Medicaid and the CMS Network, may pay for those services.

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Infant Hearing
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www.cms-kids.org