

Why Physicians Check Newborn Hearing Screen Status and Provide Needed Follow Up

- ✓ As many as 3-4 babies in 1,000 have a significant hearing loss. Most of these are permanent hearing losses that will not improve with age.
- ✓ Audiologists can provide hearing evaluations regardless of a child's age or stage of development.
- ✓ Hearing aids can be fit on a child as young as 2 weeks old. Early fitting of hearing aids is essential to providing the developing brain with early and consistent auditory access. Without this access, neurological atrophy associated with auditory pathways can occur.
- ✓ Early intervention services, especially when begun by age 6 months, can make a significant difference in how well babies with a hearing loss learn language. NM early intervention programs provide information, support, and services at no cost to families to help their children develop language, speech, and listening skills.
- ✓ Babies who refer on a hearing screening at the hospital because of fluid in their ear(s) may not have a permanent hearing loss, but they are more susceptible to ear infections. Even with good medical follow-up, 10% of preschoolers continue to have chronic ear problems. Children with early, recurrent ear problems are at risk for developing delays in language, listening, talking and academic skills.
- ✓ It is critical to follow up on even one-sided hearing loss. Children who have a hearing loss in only 1 ear have 10 times the risk for failing a grade in school compared to children without hearing loss.
- ✓ By the time a child reaches school age, a child with as little as a mild, untreated, permanent hearing loss already has an average 1.2 year language, cognitive and social delay.
- ✓ Hearing loss has been shown to negatively impact every dimension of the human experience including physical health.