



## **SHOULD YOU HAVE YOUR CHILD'S HEARING TESTED?**

If your child is enrolled in the Birth to Three System AND is showing delays in speech, language, or social development or if there are concerns about their hearing, your child should be evaluated by a pediatric audiologist.

### **Some reasons a hearing test is so important are:**

- Even a small loss of hearing in one or both ears may affect speech and language development and could result in long-term communication, social, behavioral and educational difficulties.
- Some children develop a hearing loss **AFTER** birth. If your baby passed the Newborn Hearing Screening, it is not a guarantee that your baby's hearing is normal now.
- Vocabulary develops more slowly in children who have untreated hearing loss. Children with untreated hearing loss produce shorter and simpler sentences than children with normal hearing.
- Children must hear all sounds clearly for normal speech and language to develop.
- Children are not able to listen like adults. If young children do not hear part of what is said, they are not able to fill in missing parts.
- A hearing loss can mean a child hears some sounds but not others. Normal hearing is hearing **ALL** sounds at a soft level.

### **Signs or reasons that your child might be at risk for or have a hearing loss are:**

- Your child speaks too loudly or not loud enough because they do not hear their own voice when speaking.
- Your child speaks in shorter and simpler sentences than children with normal hearing.
- Your child does not speak clearly; they always miss sounds in words or do not make certain sounds.
- You have a family history of childhood hearing loss.
- Your child has an abnormal looking ear or has pits or tags around the ear.
- Your child spent more than 5 days in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU).
- Your child was exposed to an utero infection during pregnancy.
- Your child has a syndrome associated with hearing loss or progressive or late-onset hearing loss such as Usher syndrome, Hunter syndrome or Charcot-Marie-Tooth syndrome.
- Your child had a postnatal infection associated with hearing loss including confirmed bacterial and viral meningitis, or Cytomegalovirus (CMV).
- Your child has undergone chemotherapy.

## Birth to Three Can Help

Talk to your service coordinator about your concerns. They will help you identify the next steps and explore the resources and financial assistance options available to families enrolled in the Birth to Three System.

- A majority of medical insurances will cover a child's hearing (audiologic) evaluation. Contacting your pediatrician is a first step.
- If your insurance does not cover audiologic evaluations, Birth to Three will pay for a hearing evaluation and transportation to the evaluation as long as it is listed on your child's Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). Your program will identify a pediatric audiologist for you. If you choose to identify your own pediatric audiologist, you will be responsible for payment.
- Once the evaluation is completed your team will go over the results with you and determine if there is a need for changes in your IFSP. This includes getting necessary equipment to assist your child to hear and any ongoing management of the device or regular hearing evaluations.
- If your child is enrolled in Birth to Three and is deaf or hard of hearing you may choose to receive services from one of the programs that specialize in services to the deaf or hard of hearing. Your service coordinator can help you identify the program(s) that serves your town. For more information on Birth to Three specialty programs, please go to our website: <http://www.birth23.org/programs/hsp/>
- To read the *Birth to Three Service Guideline on Young Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing*, go to <http://www.birth23.org/files/SGsPlus/SG5-Hearing.pdf>. It is also available in Spanish at <http://www.birth23.org/files/SGsPlus/SG5-Hearing-SP.pdf>
- For links to additional information on hearing loss, resources involving hearing and early hearing detection and intervention see the resources for Deaf and Hard of Hearing webpage on the Birth to Three website at <http://www.birth23.org/resources/deafhoh/>