

Checking Your Child's Hearing

What are the signs of a hearing problem in a young child?

Hearing problems are often not obvious until children are 12 to 18 months of age, when they should begin saying their first words. Signs of hearing loss in very young children may not be easy to notice. Children who can't hear well often respond to their environment by using their senses of sight and touch, which can hide their hearing problems.

Answer the questions below about your child to identify signs of a hearing problem. If you answer "no" to any question, ask your family doctor if your child should be checked for hearing problems.

	Yes	No
Birth to 4 Months of Age		
Is your baby startled by a sudden loud sound, such as a cough, a shout, a dog bark or a hand-clap?	_____	_____
When sleeping in a quiet room, does your baby move or wake up at the sound of voices or nearby noises?	_____	_____
When your baby is crying or fretful, does he or she seem to calm down, even for a minute, when you speak while out of his or her sight, when music starts or when there is a sudden loud noise?	_____	_____
At three to four months of age, does your baby sometimes turn his or her head or move his or her eyes toward a sound?	_____	_____
Does your baby seem to recognize his or her mother's voice better than other voices?	_____	_____

	Yes	No
4 to 8 Months of Age		
Does your baby turn his or her head and eyes toward a sound when the sound is coming from outside your baby's peripheral (side) vision?	_____	_____
In a quiet setting, does your baby's expression change or do your baby's eyes widen at the sound of a voice or a loud noise?	_____	_____
Does your baby enjoy ringing bells, squeezing noisemakers or shaking a rattle?	_____	_____
By six months of age, does your baby seem to talk or babble back to people who are speaking or making noises?	_____	_____
By six months of age, does your baby's babbling include four different sounds?	_____	_____

	Yes	No
8 to 12 Months of Age		
Does your baby turn directly and quickly toward a soft noisemaker, to the calling of his or her name, or to a "shush" that is outside his or her peripheral (side) vision?	_____	_____
Does your baby's voice go up and down in pitch when he or she is babbling?	_____	_____
Does your baby make several different consonant sounds (such as <i>m, b, p, g</i>) when he or she is babbling?	_____	_____
Does your baby seem to enjoy music and respond to it by listening, bouncing or "singing along"?	_____	_____
Does your baby understand the command "no"?	_____	_____

Resources for parents of children with hearing problems



- The Alexander Graham Bell Association, 3417 Volta Place N.W., Washington, DC 20007 (telephone: 202-337-5220)
- American Society for Deaf Children, 2848 Arden Way, Suite 210, Sacramento, CA 95825-1373 (telephone: 800-942-ASDC)
- American Speech Language-Hearing Association, 10801 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852 (telephone: 301-897-5700)

This handout provides a general overview on this topic and may not apply to everyone. To find out if this handout applies to you and to get more information on this subject, talk to your family doctor.



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