

Preparing your baby for the tests

The audiologist will get the most accurate results if your baby is sound asleep during the assessment. You can help by:

- keeping your baby awake for a few hours before the appointment
- waiting to feed your baby until just before testing begins
- bringing a comfortable, warm blanket
- having extra diapers on hand, just in case.

Have the tests done at the right time

The best time for an audiologist to do the hearing assessment is when your baby is about two months old. While you may want to have it done sooner, results are not as accurate or as easy to obtain. You will be contacted to make an appointment for your baby to be assessed at the right time so that the most accurate results can be achieved.

Be on the lookout for signs of hearing loss

It is important to pay close attention to your baby's speech and language development, because problems with speech and language development can be a sign of hearing loss. The developmental milestones in this brochure will help you to know what to look for.

Regional Infant Hearing Programs

Ontario's Infant Hearing Program services are provided through regional offices.

For contact information please visit www.ontario.ca/infanthearing.

To order by phone:
1-800-668-9938
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Infant Hearing Program



Your baby needs a hearing assessment

Infant Hearing Program

Your baby has received a *refer* result from the hearing screening

A *refer* result means that your baby needs a hearing assessment. It does not always mean that your baby is deaf or hard of hearing.

Most babies who receive a *refer* result have normal hearing. Sometimes, debris in the ear canal or movement during the screening will cause a *refer* result. The only way to find out is to have a hearing assessment performed by an audiologist. Your regional Infant Hearing Program will arrange an appointment for you with an audiologist who is an expert in testing babies.

The assessment will determine much more information about your baby's hearing than the newborn screening. It takes more time and you may need to go for more than one visit.

The hearing assessment

The audiologist will do several different tests. In each test a small earphone is gently placed in your baby's ear. One test measures the movement of the eardrum. Another uses a tiny microphone to detect an echo from inside the ear. The most important test measures your baby's brainwaves in response to sounds using small sticky electrodes placed on the forehead and behind the ears.

All of these hearing tests are completely safe and will not hurt your baby. Most babies fall asleep and are not disturbed by them. In fact they work best when your baby is sleeping.

When the assessment is finished, the audiologist will talk to you about the results. Most babies are found to have normal hearing. If your baby does have a hearing loss, the audiologist will direct you to the services and supports that are available to help you and your child.

Developmental milestones

These developmental milestones show some of the skills that mark the progress of young children as they learn to communicate. There are also some tips on how you can help your child develop speech and language skills. If your child is not meeting one or more of these milestones, please contact your local Preschool Speech and Language Program.



By 6 months

- turns to source of sounds
- startles in response to sudden, loud noises
- makes different cries for different needs – I'm hungry, I'm tired
- watches your face as you talk
- smiles and laughs in response to your smiles and laughs
- imitates coughs or other sounds – *ah, eh, buh*

By 12 months

- follows simple one-step directions – “sit down”
- looks across the room to something you point to
- uses three or more words
- uses gestures to communicate – waves “bye bye”, shakes head “no”
- gets your attention using sounds, gestures and pointing while looking at your eyes
- brings you toys to show you
- “performs” for attention and praise
- combines lots of sounds as though talking – *abada baduh abee*
- shows interest in simple picture books

By 24 months

- follows two-step directions – “Go find your teddy bear and show it to Grandma”
- uses 100 or more words
- uses at least two pronouns – “you”, “me”, “mine”
- consistently combines two or more words in short phrases – “daddy hat”, “truck go down”
- enjoys being with other children
- begins to offer toys to peers and imitates other children's actions and words
- people can understand his or her words 50 to 60 per cent of the time
- forms words and sounds easily and effortlessly
- holds books the right way up and turns pages
- “reads” to stuffed animals or toys
- scribbles with crayons

Babies like it when you:

- Get down to their level so they can see your face. This tells them that you're interested in what they're doing and saying. It makes it easier to interact with you.
- Repeat the sounds they make. Babies enjoy making noises, and like it when you imitate them over and over.
- Sing and laugh, especially when you are feeding, bathing, and changing them. Remember to talk to your baby throughout the day about things you do and see – “Mommy's putting on her coat”, “That's a big truck”
- Tell them the names of the objects they are looking at and playing with. Babies are interested in exploring and learning about new things, and like to hear what things are called.

By 9 months

- responds to his/her name
- responds to the telephone ringing or a knock at the door
- understands being told “no”
- gets what he or she wants through sounds and gestures, for example, reaching to be picked up
- plays social games with you, for example, peek-a-boo
- enjoys being around people
- babbles and repeats sounds – *babababa, duhduhduh*

By 18 months

- understands the concepts of “in and out”, “off and on”
- points to several body parts when asked
- uses at least 20 words
- responds with words or gestures to simple questions – “Where's teddy?”, “What's that?”
- demonstrates some pretend play with toys – gives teddy a drink
- makes at least four different consonant sounds – *b, n, d, g, w, h*
- enjoys being read to and looking at simple books with you
- points to pictures using one finger

By 30 months

- understands the concepts of size (big/little) and quantity (a little, a lot, more)
- uses some adult grammar – “two apples”, “bird flying”, “I jumped”
- uses more than 350 words
- uses action words – run, spill, fall
- begins taking short turns with other children, using both toys and words
- shows concern when another child is hurt or sad
- combines several actions in play – feeds doll then puts her to sleep; puts blocks in train then drives train and drops blocks off
- puts sounds at the start of most words
- produces words with two or more syllables or beats – “ba-na-na”, “com-pu-ter”, “a-pple”
- recognizes familiar logos and signs – stop sign
- remembers and understands familiar stories

Toddlers like it when you:

- Let them touch and hold books while you point to and name the pictures.
- Use real words instead of baby talk – “give me” instead of *ta ta* or “water” instead of *wawa*.
- Take the time to listen to them – they want you to hear all of their new sounds, words and ideas.
- Give them simple directions to follow – “Go find your red boots”.
- Use lots of different words when you talk to them – opposite words like up/down, in/out; action words like “running”, “splashing”, and descriptive words like “happy”, “big”, “little”, “clean”, “dirty”.
- Encourage them to play with other children – at the library, play groups, park.