

What is a Communication Development Plan?

Your IHP audiologist, speech-language pathologist and other professionals will provide information to help you make decisions about your child's communication development. This will be formalized in a written document called a Communication Development Plan. Communication development services may involve one or more of the following:

- Learning to listen
- Learning to use voice to communicate
- Use of hearing technology (e.g., hearing aids, FM systems, cochlear implants)
- Use of a signed language (e.g., American Sign Language, Langue des Signes Québécoise)
- Use of manual communication and gestures.



For further information about Newborn Hearing Screening or IHP, please go to:

www.ontario.ca/infantheating

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Infant Hearing Program



Your baby's hearing

Does your child have a hearing loss?

Why does my baby need to have several hearing screens and tests?

The newborn hearing screening only shows that a hearing problem might be present. In order to diagnose the sounds your baby can hear or may have difficulty hearing, more information is needed. The followup testing is done by an Infant Hearing Program (IHP) authorized audiologist.

How do you test a baby's hearing?

The audiologist will test your baby's hearing in a very quiet room while the baby is sleeping. Electrodes (small cloth-like patches leading to computer connections) are placed on the baby. Soft tips are placed inside your baby's ears. Sounds at different loudness levels will be played into your baby's ears. A computer measures the hearing nerve's response to the sounds. This information is used by the audiologist to identify babies who have a hearing loss, and to assess the amount of hearing loss your child may have. The test is completely safe.

My baby has a hearing loss.

What next?

After a complete hearing test, the audiologist will explain the details of the hearing loss:

- The type of hearing loss
- The sounds your baby can hear
- The sounds your baby may not hear or have difficulty hearing
- How the hearing loss may affect speech and language development
- The types of hearing technology (e.g., hearing aids) that could help your baby hear
- Support services made available to you by IHP, including access to a Family Support Worker who can provide counselling and support and help you find other resources you or your child may need.

Why is it important to identify a child's hearing loss so soon after birth?

Most babies are born ready to hear their parents' voices and the sounds of the world around them. Babies with hearing loss have the same need to communicate as babies with normal hearing. Identifying hearing loss as soon as possible helps IHP professionals working with your family ensure family-centred services are in place to provide your child with the opportunity to develop language and communication skills.

What is the role of the Family Support Worker?

The Family Support Worker is available to assist your family. This trained professional supports families of children with hearing loss in many ways, including:

- Providing counselling support
- Helping you connect with services available for you, your child and family
- Connecting you with other parents of children with hearing loss
- Helping your family with transitions to child care and school.

What kinds of hearing technology are available for my child?

There are different types of hearing technology (e.g., hearing aids, cochlear implants, FM systems) available for your baby. Your audiologist will provide important information and work closely with you to help with decision-making regarding the use of hearing technology for your child.

