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## Hearing Tests FAQ

Read this page to find answers to some common questions about hearing aids.

### **Q. Should my child's hearing be tested with hearing aids on or off?**

A. Your audiologist should test your child's hearing both ways:

- The behavioral hearing test without hearing aids sets a baseline.
- A test done with your child wearing the aids shows how much his hearing has improved. This is also called an amplification check or a "functional gain" test. Get this test done every 6 months to find out what sounds your child hears. Your audiologist can then fine-tune your child's hearing aids.

If you aren't sure the hearing aids are working, ask the audiologist to do another amplification check with the aids on. If that test shows that your child's hearing has gotten worse for reasons that aren't clear, ask the audiologist to do another hearing test without the aids.

### **Q. How often do I need to get my child's hearing re-tested?**

A. Here's when and how often your child's hearing may be tested:

- After your child is first diagnosed. These tests will show what your child can and can't hear.
- After the audiologist knows how much your child hears, she may test him every 3 to 6 months. Testing often will tell you if your child's hearing loss is changing.
- After the hearing loss seems to stay the same, audiologist may test young children every 6 to 12 months.
- Once your child is older, he may be tested once a year.

### **Q. Will my child's hearing test tell me whether hearing aids will help?**

A. The hearing test tells you how severe your child's hearing loss is. This helps predict how much hearing aids will help. But other things can affect how useful hearing aids are:

- Your child's intelligence
- How old your child is when she starts wearing hearing aids
- How much she knows of language, or speaking and understanding words
- Speech and language therapy

For example, for children with severe or profound hearing loss, hearing aids help more if they get them when they're still babies. These children also do better if they get extra help learning language.

**Q. When should I bring my child in for a hearing test?**

A. Take your child to an audiologist if you think he isn't hearing right. Tests can be done even on a newborn baby. Or ask your doctor to refer you to an audiologist.

These are some signs of hearing loss:

- Your child isn't trying to speak when you think he should
- Sometimes he doesn't react to sounds around the house, like a phone ringing or a dog barking
- He has a lot of ear infections

Read more about what to look for on our [Signs of Hearing Loss](http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/hearingloss/signs.jsp) ([www.raisingdeafkids.org/hearingloss/signs.jsp](http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/hearingloss/signs.jsp))

**Q. What questions should I ask the audiologist?**

A. Think about your questions before you go to the audiologist. Write them down to help you remember. Ask the audiologist some of these questions before she tests your child:

- Has you worked with young children before?
- What kind of tests will be done?
- What's going to happen to my child during the test? Does she need to be asleep or awake for the test?

Ask some of these questions after the tests are done:

- What did the tests show? (Ask the audiologist to show you the audiogram and explain what the different marks mean. Ask her to explain any words you don't understand.)
- How sure are you that the results are right?
- What do I need to do next? Do I need to come back for more tests?

**Q. My child gets ear infections a lot. Does the hearing test work well if my child has an ear infection when he's tested?**

A. Some doctors may want to test your child when he has an ear infection. Why?

- To find out if the ear infection is causing a hearing loss. This kind of hearing loss is called [conductive hearing loss](http://www.raisingdeaf.org/hearingloss/types/conductive.jsp) ([www.raisingdeaf.org/hearingloss/types/conductive.jsp](http://www.raisingdeaf.org/hearingloss/types/conductive.jsp))
- If your child has a [sensorineural hearing loss](http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/hearingloss/types/sensorineural.jsp) ([www.raisingdeafkids.org/hearingloss/types/sensorineural.jsp](http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/hearingloss/types/sensorineural.jsp)), to find out how much loss is caused by the middle ear problem. Ear infections could cause more hearing loss.

Some doctors like to treat the ear infection first.

Then they test the child. They do this because when you cure ear infections, you can stop the hearing loss.

If your child gets many ear infections, he may have a conductive hearing loss for a long time. If this happens, your child may need special help to learn language, and in school. Watch your child closely to see if he seems to be having a hard time in school.

**Q. The audiologist said she couldn't test my child. Why not?**

A. For most hearing tests, don't bring your child in if she is hungry, sick, upset, or scared. Make sure she's had a nap and is in a good mood. If that doesn't work, the audiologist may want to do a test that she can sleep through. These kinds of tests are an [ABR](#) or [OAE](#). Your doctor may give her something to help her sleep.

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*You can find this page online at:*

<http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/hearingloss/testing/hearingtests/faq.jsp>