

INFANT HEARING PROGRAM



Hearing screening  
for your new baby



## It is important to know if your baby can hear

The first months and years of a baby's life are very important for developing language. Undetected hearing loss is one of the causes of delayed language development. Delayed language development can lead to behaviour and emotional problems and later, to problems in school.

Every year in Ontario, about three in 1,000 babies are born deaf or hard of hearing. Through Ontario's Infant Hearing Program, these babies can be found very early and given the help they need to develop language.

Even though your baby does not have a known risk factor for hearing loss, it is still very important to have the hearing screening.

## Screening is quick, simple and safe

Your baby will be screened in the hospital before you both go home. The technology used is completely safe and reliable. It will not hurt your baby. Your baby will probably sleep through the whole experience.

The machine used for the screening uses a technology called DPOAE (Distortion Product Otoacoustic Emissions). With this technology, a very small earphone is placed in the baby's ear and soft sounds are played through it. The ear's response to these sounds is measured and recorded. The entire screening takes just a few minutes, and will give you the results right away.

# Developmental milestones

These developmental milestones show some of the skills that babies can do by a certain age. There are also some tips on how you can help your baby learn to communicate.

## 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 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/she wants through gestures e.g., reaching to be picked up
- plays social games with you e.g., peek-a-boo
- enjoys being around people
- babbles and repeats sounds – *babababa, duhduhduh*

to mark the progress of young children as they learn to  
to your child develop strong speech and language skills.

### By 12 months

- follows simple one-step directions – "sit down"
- looks across the room to something you point to
- consistently uses three to five 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 18 months

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



## By 24 months

- follows two-step directions – "Go find your teddy bear and show it to Grandma"
- uses 100 to 150 words
- uses at least two pronouns – "you", "me", "mine"
- consistently combines two to four 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/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

## By 30 months

- understands the concepts of size (big/little) and quantity (a little, a lot, more)
- uses some adult grammar – "two cookies", "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 – McDonalds golden arches, stop sign
- remembers and understands familiar stories



### 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.

### 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 "bottle" instead of *baba*.
- 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.

## Screening result is either *pass* or *refer*

Most babies will pass the hearing screening. This means their hearing is fine at that time.

In a very small number of the babies who pass the screening, a hearing loss may develop at a later age. It is therefore important to watch for signs of hearing loss as your baby grows. The developmental milestones in this brochure will help you know what to look for.

Some babies will receive a *refer* result. This means your baby needs a second hearing screening. Most babies who receive a *refer* result do have normal hearing. A slight cold or stuffiness, earwax, fidgeting, or even noise in the room can cause a *refer* result.

However, because finding those babies who are deaf or hard of hearing is so important, all babies with a *refer* result must have a second hearing screening. Wherever possible this will take place before you leave the hospital. If your baby needs another screening after you leave the hospital, an appointment will be made for you in your community. It is very important that you keep the appointment.

## Early hearing screening is important

Screening is the first step in finding babies who are deaf or hard of hearing. There are many services in place to help these infants. Children whose hearing loss is identified early and who receive the support they need, will have the same chance to develop language as hearing children.

## Regional Infant Hearing Programs

Ontario's Infant Hearing Program provides its services through the following regional offices:

Hamilton-Wentworth, Niagara, Brant  
and Haldimand-Norfolk  
"Early Words / Premiers Mots"  
905-385-7927 ext. 227  
or 1-866-826-4327 ext. 227  
[www.ascy.ca/ascy\\_infanthearing.html](http://www.ascy.ca/ascy_infanthearing.html)

Halton, Peel, Waterloo and  
Wellington-Dufferin  
Central West Infant Hearing Program  
905-855-3557  
or 1-877-374-6625  
TTY 905-855-4925  
[www.erinoak.org](http://www.erinoak.org)

Manitowish-Sudbury, Algoma,  
Cochrane, and Nipissing-Timiskaming  
"Wordplay / Jeux de Mots"  
1-877-522-6655

Kenora Rainy River  
"North Words"  
1-877-553-7122  
[www.northwords.com](http://www.northwords.com)

Ottawa, Renfrew County and  
District and Eastern Ontario  
"FirstWords"  
613-688-3979 or  
1-866-432-7447  
TTY 613-820-7427  
[www.pqhcs.com/firstwords/infant\\_hearing.htm](http://www.pqhcs.com/firstwords/infant_hearing.htm)

Simcoe County and  
Muskoka-Parry Sound  
Children's Development Services  
705-739-5696  
or 1-800-675-1979

Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and  
Addington, Leeds, Grenville and  
Lanark, and Hastings Prince Edward  
613-549-1232 ext. 145  
or 1-800-267-7875 ext. 145  
TTY 613-549-7692  
or 1-866-299-1136  
[www.healthunit.on.ca](http://www.healthunit.on.ca)

Midsex, London, Oxford, Elgin-  
St. Thomas, Sarnia-Lambton, Huron-  
Perth and Grey Bruce Owen Sound  
"tykeTALK" / Southwest Infant  
Hearing Program"  
519-663-0273  
or 1-877-818-8255  
[www.tyketalk.com](http://www.tyketalk.com)

Thunder Bay  
Thunder Bay District Health Unit  
807-625-5922  
1-888-294-6630 ext. 5922  
[www.tbdu.com](http://www.tbdu.com)

City of Toronto  
Toronto Preschool Speech and  
Language Services  
416-338-8255  
TTY 416-338-0025  
[www.tpsls.on.ca](http://www.tpsls.on.ca)

York Region, Durham, Haliburton,  
Kawartha and Pine-Ridge  
"Beyond Words"  
1-888-703-5437  
TTY 905-773-7282  
[www.beyond-words.org](http://www.beyond-words.org)

Windsor-Essex and Kent-Cnatham  
"Talk 2 Me"  
(519) 252-0636  
[www.smflc.ca](http://www.smflc.ca)

### For more information, contact:

Government of Ontario  
INFOline: toll free 1-866-821-7770  
TTY 1-800-387-5559  
[www.children.gov.on.ca](http://www.children.gov.on.ca)

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communiquant avec

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