

# A Parent's Guide to Hearing Aids



## Why is hearing technology recommended for young children?

-  If your family's goal is spoken language development, early and consistent use of hearing technology can give them the best chance at reaching that goal.
  - Children are sponges! They learn to speak by accessing/hearing all of the sounds of language around them. They hear people talking directly to them, and they overhear conversations from a short distance. This ability to overhear is critical for developing speech and language.
  - Hearing technology provides your child with improved access to the sounds of spoken language, both direct, and overheard.

 Children who are hard of hearing or deaf have limited access to the sounds of spoken language. Limited exposure to language can result in delays in language development and social skills. Hearing technology is one way to improve access to language. Other ways to provide access to language include visual modalities, such as American Sign Language.

Children whose families chose a visual modality for communication may use hearing technology to support their access to sounds in their environment.

## How will hearing technology be fit to my child?



-  Your audiologist will work with you and your child to select hearing technology that works best for your child.
  - The technology will be custom fit to your child's ear and to their hearing.
  - Your child's hearing technology will be programmed by your audiologist to make the important sounds of speech as accessible as possible to your child.
  - Regular follow up visits are important to ensure proper fit and function of the technology, and to make sure your child has consistent access to the sounds of spoken language.

## What should I expect?



-  Hearing technology makes sounds louder to give your child improved access to them. The technology does not restore "typical" hearing.
  - Even with appropriately fit hearing aids, most children will be unable to access some parts of spoken language and certain sounds in their environment.
  - Your child's success is dependent on a combination of their hearing technology, support from your family, intervention services, and their school.
  - If your child's hearing changes, their hearing technology can be changed too. Same goes for growth spurts!



This project was supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of an award totaling \$235,000 Award number H61MC30766 Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, "Earliest interactions: Supporting 1-3-6 and Family Engagement". The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government.





## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



### Can I go to any local audiologist?

When you call to make an appointment, you should ask to see an audiologist who is experienced in pediatric hearing technology.



### How much does my child need to wear their hearing aids?

Families are encouraged to provide access to hearing aids during all waking hours, with the understanding that some activities (naps, baths, swimming, playing outside in the rain) may prevent hearing aid use. Taking breaks from their hearing technology is okay!

Hearing aid use is important if the goal is to encourage their spoken language development. When using their hearing technology, they may have better access to new vocabulary and the conversations happening around them. Learning does not end at school; children benefit greatly from overhearing conversations in the car, at the playground, in the car, and at home.

If you have questions, ask your audiologist about strategies to help your child and your family adjust to consistent use of hearing technology.



### What can I do to help my child?

- Give them as many examples of language as possible: read to your child, sing to them, and narrate what you are doing as you go about your day.
- Make sure you check the function of their hearing technology often. Your audiologist will show you how.
- Become a good advocate for your child's communication needs at home and at school.
- Consistently engage in intervention services, educational supports, and follow up visits with your audiologist.

