

# Newborn Hearing Screening “What to Expect”



MISSISSIPPI  
STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

is the lead agency for First Steps



**First Steps**  
Mississippi's Early Intervention Program  
For Infants And Toddlers

## Newborn Hearing Screening "What to Expect"

Hearing loss is invisible and is the most common birth disorder in children. It affects as many as 16,000 babies born in the United States each year. In Mississippi, about 160 babies are born with or develop hearing loss each year.

Newborn hearing screening is available through every hospital in the state in which more than 100 babies a year are born. The purpose of the hearing screening is to identify children with hearing loss at an early age so that proper follow-up and treatment can be recommended.

Undetected hearing loss can result in delays in speech and language and eventually lead to difficulties in school and social life. Early detection and intervention can greatly improve your child's chance of leading a complete and productive life.

This brochure is designed to answer some of the questions you may have regarding the Universal Newborn Hearing Screening and the importance of early identification of hearing loss in children.

If you have any questions regarding the hearing screening, recommended hearing testing, intervention or funding please contact the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program at (800) 451-3903.



## Resources for Information on Hearing Loss in Children

**Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program in Mississippi**  
(EHDI-M)/First Steps  
(800) 451-3903

**Information Clearinghouse, National Institute on Deafness and Communicative Disorders**  
(800)241-1044

**NCHAM-National Center for Hearing Assessment and Management**  
(435) 797-3584  
[www.infanthearing.org](http://www.infanthearing.org)

**Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**  
(202) 337-5220  
[www.agbell.org](http://www.agbell.org)

**Beginnings**  
(800) 541-4327  
[www.beginningssvcs.com](http://www.beginningssvcs.com)

**League for the Hard of Hearing**  
(817) 305-7700  
[www.lhh.org](http://www.lhh.org)

[www.listen-up.org](http://www.listen-up.org)

**Mississippi Speech/Language and Hearing Association**  
[www.mshausa.org](http://www.mshausa.org)

**John Tracy Clinic**  
800-522-4582



## HOW WILL MY BABY'S HEARING BE SCREENED?

Most of the hospitals in Mississippi use automated auditory brainstem response testing (AABR) or otoacoustic emissions testing (OAE) in their screening programs. Both tests are quick and painless and can be administered shortly after birth. The AABR uses sensors placed on the infant's head and an earphone over the ear. The OAE involves placing a soft probe gently into the ear canal. Hearing is measured automatically and the test takes only minutes to administer.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF MY BABY DOES NOT PASS THE HEARING SCREENING?

Sometimes the infant does not pass the screening because there is still fluid present in the ear. If your baby does not pass the screening after three separate attempts in the hospital, you will be referred for a complete hearing test conducted by a licensed audiologist.

## IF MY BABY PASSES THE SCREENING, DO I NEED TO WORRY ABOUT HAVING HIS OR HER HEARING EVALUATED LATER?

The results of the screening show how your baby is hearing at this time. Children who have a family history of childhood hearing loss, chronic illness, or reoccurring ear infections are "at risk" for developing hearing loss after they leave the hospital. If your child is "at risk" for hearing loss, you should have your child's hearing evaluated every six months until he or she is three years of age. Your physician can help you determine if your child's hearing needs to be monitored.

Sometimes the cause of late-onset hearing loss is unknown. It is also important to monitor your child's speech and language development. Delays in speech or language can be the result of an undetected hearing loss.

## MILESTONES FOR LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

### From birth to three months your baby should:

- Startle or jump when there is a sudden, loud sound
- Stir or awaken when someone talks or makes noise
- Recognize and be comforted by the sound of your voice

### Between three and six months

- Turn their eyes in the direction of an interesting sound
- Respond to your voice
- Turn in the direction of their name being called

### Between six and twelve months

- Understand such common words as "no" and "bye-bye"
- Use speech sounds to get and keep attention
- Imitate different speech sounds

## WHAT HAPPENS IF HEARING LOSS IS CONFIRMED?

If your child is diagnosed with a hearing loss, the audiologist will refer you to a physician who will examine your baby for any medical (or treatable) conditions that may be causing the hearing loss. If the physician finds that your child has an untreatable hearing loss, hearing aids may be recommended. More testing will be completed and hearing aids will be selected and adjusted to provide the most benefit to your child. You will need to visit your audiologist regularly to be sure the hearing aids are in good working order and to monitor any possible changes in your child's hearing.

During this process, you will also be referred to the First Steps Early Intervention Program. You will be assigned a Service Coordinator who will assist you in obtaining intervention services. First Steps is free of charge and is an excellent way to become aware of the variety of services that are available. You are entitled to receive assistance from First Steps until your child reaches the age of three. At that time, the local school district will assist you in obtaining services for your child if they are needed.