

Infant HEARING



First Steps

Mississippi's Early Intervention Program
For Infants And Toddlers

THE EARLIER, THE BETTER

Hearing is crucial for language skills. A newborn hearing screen can be done in the hospital nursery as soon as four hours after delivery. Early identification of hearing loss is important to decrease the likelihood of developmental delays in the child's speech, language, and social skills.

The hearing screen is usually performed while the newborn sleeps. Small ear couplers are placed on the baby to measure auditory brainwave responses to clicking sounds or oto-acoustic emissions are registered by recording these sounds in the outer ear canal. The screening process usually takes about ten minutes to complete.

First Steps and the Mississippi State Department of Health provide hospitals with *Baby's Hearing Record*, an official document to include the infant's hearing screen results. Parents who have questions about their baby's speech development may review *What To Expect: Normal Development* on the back of *Baby's Hearing Record*. The record includes information about hearing, and the First Steps telephone numbers. First Steps can assist you in scheduling appointments for your baby. A "pass" in hearing screen results means the child's

hearing screening responses are normal. A "referral" in hearing screen results means some complications have been found and a follow-up hearing screen appointment should be scheduled when you are given the official *Baby's Hearing Record*. Follow-up screening is usually completed at your baby's birth hospital. Most, but not all children, who receive a "referral", will pass their follow-up hearing screen. Your baby's doctor may refer you to an audiologist, a specialist in hearing testing.

IS THERE A CHARGE?

At most hospitals the screening is free or for a small fee. The Mississippi State Department of Health endeavors to ensure Universal Newborn Hearing Screening for all babies born in Mississippi by providing most facilities with equipment and/or supplies. This makes the process very inexpensive.

HEARING SCREENING BENEFITS

Screening babies for hearing loss helps parents, health care providers, and education specialists identify children who have speech and language delays before they become obvious at the age of two or beyond. The earlier a child is identified, the greater the opportunity to address a hearing loss or speech

delay with appropriate assistive listening devices and proper language stimulation.

While most states provide screening to only high risk infants with a family history of hearing impairment, low-birth weight, or other complications, Mississippi provides this screening to all infants. One of the goals of the Mississippi State Department of Health's Early Intervention Program is to assist every child who has been identified with a hearing loss.

THERE ARE SOLUTIONS

No developmental delay impacts an infant's ability to communicate with the world as severely as a hearing loss. The severity of language delays may be related to the length of time the hearing loss is left untreated. When hearing loss is diagnosed in infancy, treatment or intervention can begin as early as three months of age.

If you suspect your baby may have a problem, don't wait. Talk to your baby's doctor immediately or call First Steps at 1-800-451-3903 or 601-576-7427. Join the Mississippi State Department of Health in ensuring every baby born in Mississippi has **Early Hearing Detection and Intervention**.

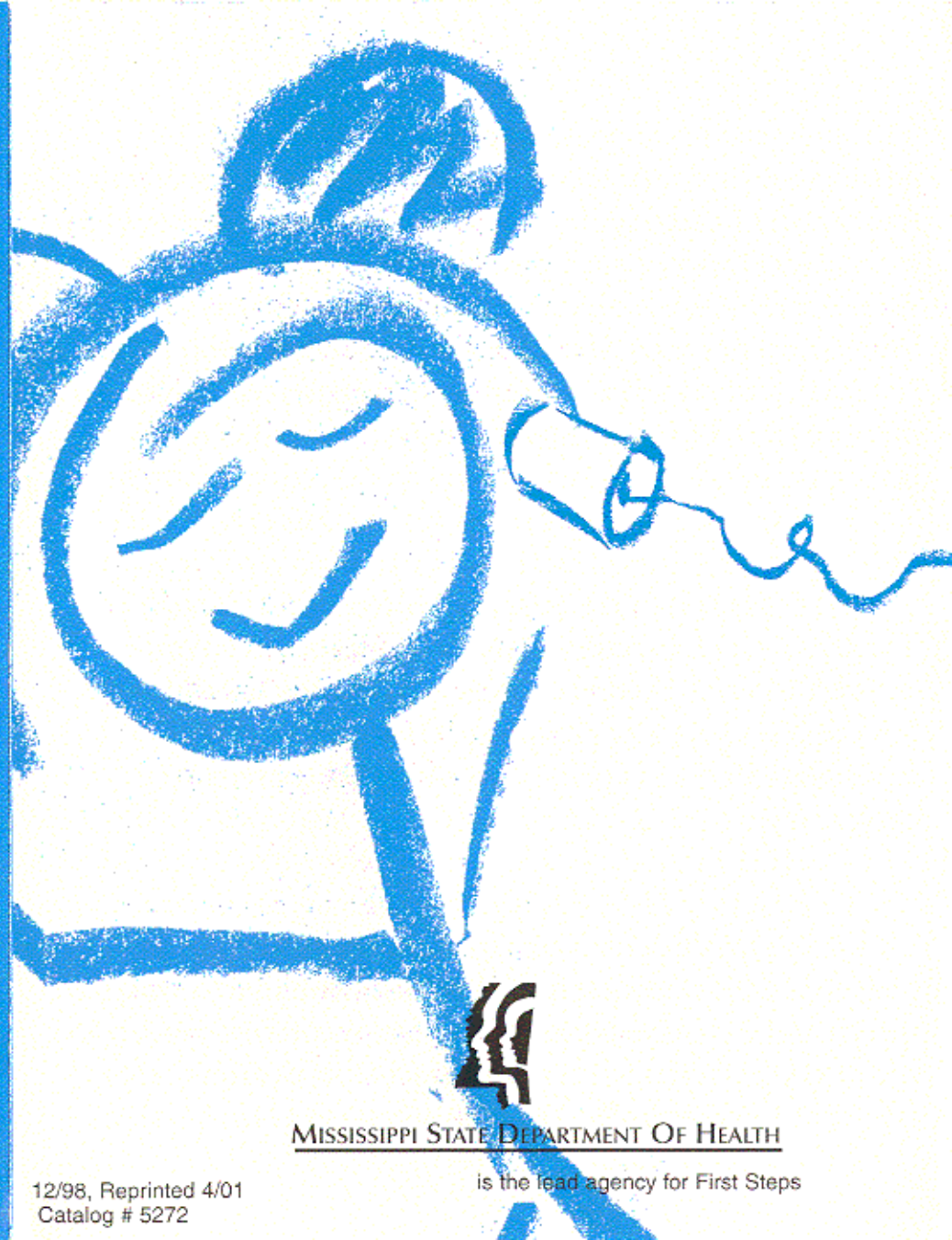
Even newborns who appear physically healthy can have some degree of hearing loss. You cannot see hearing loss – it is invisible. More than 100,000 children under the age of five in the U.S. suffer from a hearing loss. A hearing loss can delay normal childhood speech and language

CAN YOUR BABY HEAR?

development. Join First Steps and the Mississippi State Department of Health in ensuring every baby born in Mississippi has a hearing screen.

Early Hearing Detection and Intervention in Mississippi.

Infant hearing screens are done everyday at a hospital near you.



MISSISSIPPI STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

is the lead agency for First Steps