

EARLY INTERVENTION BEFORE 6 MONTHS OF AGE

When a Hearing Loss is Identified



Check that the family has enrolled the child in Early Intervention (EI) services, and is able to access resources for specialty medical services and hearing aids.

Service	Required Action	Purpose/Resources
Early Intervention Services	Refer for EI services by calling the Hawaii Keiki Information Services System (H-KISS).	See pages 3-3 and 3-5 for more information about EI. H-KISS can be reached at 808-594-0066 or toll-free at 1-800-235-5477.
Medical Services	Provide/refer for complete head/neck exam for craniofacial anomalies, otologic evaluation, ophthalmologic evaluation, and genetics evaluation.	Medical evaluation is needed to help determine etiology of the hearing loss, to assess for related conditions, and to provide recommendations for medical treatment.
Hearing Aids and Other Assistive Listening Devices	Refer for medical and otologic evaluations for management of hearing loss and to obtain medical clearance for hearing aids. Refer to pediatric hearing aid provider.	See page 3-4 for a list of pediatric hearing aid providers. Management of OME should not delay hearing aid fitting. See Appendix D for patient checklist.

30-40% of children with confirmed hearing loss will demonstrate developmental delays or other disabilities.

Joint Committee on Infant Hearing (2007)⁴

More about Medical Follow-up for Hearing Loss

Every infant with confirmed hearing loss and/or middle ear dysfunction should be referred for otologic and other medical evaluation. Essential components of the medical evaluation include a complete medical history, family history of childhood onset permanent hearing loss, physical exam, and indicated laboratory and radiographic studies.

If etiology of the hearing loss is unknown after the initial evaluation, the following should be considered:

- CT of temporal bones for cochlear abnormalities and to assess for potential candidacy for cochlear implant.
- Ophthalmologic exam
- EKG
- Urinalysis
- CMV testing
- Genetic evaluation

Refer for developmental pediatrics, neurology, cardiology and nephrology evaluations (as needed). Specialists should have pediatric expertise.

Resources for Early Intervention

Part C early intervention services are available on all islands and are provided at no cost to the family. Families are encouraged (but not required) to allow providers to bill health insurance first, if the child has coverage.

In Hawai`i, children with developmental delays and/or diagnosed conditions or environmental factors that put them at-risk of developmental delay are eligible for Part C early intervention.

- Children with sensorineural, permanent conductive, or mixed hearing loss in one or both ears are automatically eligible for Part C early intervention services in Hawai`i.
- Fluctuating conductive hearing loss does not make a child automatically eligible for Part C early intervention services in Hawai`i.

To make a referral, please call the Hawai'i Keiki Information Services System (H-KISS) information and referral line:

Oahu: 594-0066

Toll-free from Neighbor Islands: 1-800-235-5477

(Voice and TTY available)

Telephone hours: Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

If calling after hours, please leave a message. See Appendix D for the H-KISS fax referral form. Upon referral, H-KISS will contact the family with information about early intervention services in their area. A care coordinator will be assigned to assist the family during intake and help them obtain services.

Resources for Pediatric Hearing Aid Fitting

Providers on this list applied for and were awarded contracts with the Department of Health to provide pediatric audiology services. For additional providers who dispense pediatric hearing aids in your area, please consult your phonebook.

<u>DOH Contracted Audiologists who Provide Hearing Aids</u>	<u>Appt. Phone #</u>
Big Island Hearing Center, LLC (Big Island–Hilo).....	935–1299
Hawai`i Professional Audiology (Oahu).....	597–1877
Hawai`i Professional Audiology (Kauai).....	245–1530
Island Audiology (Oahu)	375–2253
June Uyehara–Isono, Inc. (Oahu, Big Island–Hilo, Kona)	877–524–1432
Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children (Oahu)	983–8230
Kapiolani Medical Center – Pali Momi (Oahu)	535–7000, ext. 1
Maui Medical Group (Maui).....	242–6464

More about Early Intervention and Hearing Aids

Early Intervention (EI)

Many families are shocked to find out that their infant has a hearing loss. Parents may need assistance and emotional support as they learn more about their baby's diagnosis and how hearing loss can affect development. Early Intervention (EI) is key to optimal outcomes and should begin as soon as hearing loss is identified. EI services, including family support and information, can begin even before a hearing aid is received. The lead agency for EI in Hawai`i is the Hawai`i State Department of Health Early Intervention Section. See Appendix D for more information.

Audiological evaluations, auditory rehabilitation and hearing aid related procedures, such as dispensing fees, ongoing hearing aid checks and ear molds, are covered by EI for enrolled children. Use of health insurance is encouraged, but not required. Note: Part C Early Intervention does not cover surgery, sedation, medication, doctor visits, or the purchase of hearing aids.

Clearance for Hearing Aids

State law requires that medical clearance be obtained before hearing aids are provided for a child. The JCIH-2007 Position Statement states that management of otitis media with effusion should not delay the prompt fitting of amplification.⁴ Hearing aids can be fit as early as one month of age.

Loaner Hearing Aids and FM Systems

Initial hearing aid fitting for newborns often requires more flexibility and options than may be needed for older children and adults. The Hawai`i State Department of Health maintains a hearing aid loan bank, located with the Children with Special Health Needs Program (CSHNP), to provide 6 month loaner hearing aids for children enrolled in Early Intervention or the Children with Special Health Needs Program. In addition, the Early Intervention Section (EIS) has several FM systems for short-term loan to families of children enrolled in Early Intervention. This allows audiologists the time and flexibility to complete the assessment process and modify hearing aid and FM system recommendations according to the changing needs of the child. See Appendix D for contact information for CSHNP and EIS.

Payment for Hearing Aids

Hearing aids are expensive and may not be covered by a child's health insurance. Medicaid and QUEST plans cover some types of pediatric hearing aids. Families of children who are eligible for the Children with Special Health Needs Program (CSHNP) may also receive help with payment for pediatric hearing aids, if state funds are available. See Appendix D for more information about CSHNP.

In cases of financial hardship, families who are over income for Medicaid, QUEST and CSHNP may apply to the Department of Health Early Intervention Section (EIS) for

assistance in purchasing hearing aids for EI enrolled children. If state funds are available, EIS will help with some of the purchase costs. Insurance and any other funding sources will be billed first if the child has coverage, and then EIS will be billed. Families are responsible for any remaining costs.

Cochlear Implants

Nearly all children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing initially receive amplification through personal hearing aids. Some children who are Deaf do not benefit from the use of hearing aids and may be candidates for cochlear implants. Evaluation for cochlear implantation can begin as soon as the hearing loss is identified. Usually, implantation does not occur until approximately 12–18 months of age.

Cochlear implants require extensive rehabilitation and a team approach to assessing candidacy. In Hawai`i, cochlear implant surgery is available on Oahu at such locations as Kaiser Moanalua Medical Center, Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children, The Queen's Medical Center and Tripler Army Medical Center. For more information, please contact these hospitals or an audiologist who provides pediatric audiology services.