

A Guide to South Dakota's Newborn Hearing Screening Program



*What,
When & Why*

Bright Start
*For South Dakota
Children*



South Dakota
Department of Health
Newborn Hearing Screening Program

Why Should My Infant's Hearing Be Tested?



Three out of every 1,000 babies has a significant hearing loss at birth. Hearing loss in babies is easy to overlook because it can not be seen and they cannot tell us they are unable to hear. More than half of babies born with hearing loss are otherwise healthy and have no family history of hearing loss. Therefore, to be sure we identify every baby with hearing loss in South Dakota; we ask the birthing facilities to screen each baby's hearing before they go home.

Newborn hearing screening makes a difference for all children and their families. It is important for you to be sure that your baby has normal hearing. The first six months of life are the most important for speech and language development.

How will they screen my baby's hearing?



A baby's hearing can be screened within 24 hours of life. There are two types of hearing screening tests. Your baby may have one or both of these tests. In the first, Evoked Otoacoustic Emissions (OAE) your baby will hear a sound through a small, soft earplug. A computer measures the echoes that return from the ear. This will

tell the screener how well your baby is hearing. The test is done when your baby is quiet and should be finished in a matter of minutes.

The second type of test is an Auditory Brainstem Response (ABR) test. In this method, the baby hears a sound through small earphones.



Band-aid like electrodes are placed on their head. These help in measuring brainwaves that determine if sounds are heard normally. Both of these tests are harmless, and take only minutes to complete and most babies sleep through the hearing screening.

What if my baby does not pass the hearing screening?

There are many reasons your baby may not pass the hearing screening. Perhaps your baby was too active, or may have had fluid in the middle portion of the ear. The most common reason for not passing the first screening is that there is debris in the ear canal from the birthing process. It is important not to assume that debris is the reason for not passing the hearing screening. A second screening needs to be done to find out for sure if there is a hearing loss. If your baby does not pass the first screening, a repeat screening will be done before your baby goes home, or we will schedule a second test to be done after you leave the hospital.



If your baby does not pass the second screening, it is suggested that you take your baby to see their doctor. At this time a physical exam will be done to see if there is any reason for the hearing loss. The doctor may also feel that a hearing expert, called an Audiologist should be contacted to do more testing of your baby's hearing.



It is important that you follow through with any recommendations made by the hospital staff, physician, or audiologist.

What if my baby passes the screening?

The results of the screening show how your baby is hearing at that time. Some children who have had many ear infections, chronic illness or family history of hearing loss may develop hearing problems later in life. If you have any concerns about your child's hearing ability or speech and language development, you can have your child's hearing tested at any age.



In addition, a very small percentage of babies who do have hearing problems will pass the screening.



Speech, Language and Hearing Skills

Good hearing is very important for your baby's development. Information about hearing and typical speech and language changes are valuable for all parents. Here is a list of some things babies with normal hearing should be able to do.

Birth to 3 Months

- Startles by loud noises
- Soothed by familiar voices
- Squeals, coos, laughs, gurgles
- Makes vowel sounds like – ohh, ahh



3 – 6 Months

- Makes a variety of sounds, such as "ba-ba," "gaba," "ma"
- Seems to enjoy babbling
- Uses a variety of pitches
- Likes sound-making toys
- Turns eyes and head to sounds, including your voice



6 – 9 Months

- Responds to her or his own name
- Imitates speech by making non-speech sounds: coughing, clicking tongue, smacking lips
- Plays with sound through repetition: "la-la-la"
- Understands "no" and "bye-bye"
- Says "da – da" or "ma – ma"
- Listens to music or singing



9 – 12 Months

- Responds differently to happy or angry talking
- Turns head toward loud or soft sound
- Jabbers in response to human voice
- Uses two or three words in addition to "da – da" or "ma – ma"
- Gives toys when asked
- Stops in response to no
- Follows simple directions



12 – 18 Months

- Identifies people, body parts and toys on request
- Locates sounds in all directions
- Names what she or he wants
- Talks in what sounds like sentences, with few understandable words
- Gestures with speech
- Bounces to music
- Repeats some words you say



18 – 24 Months

- Follows simple commands
- Speaks in two-word phrases, somewhat understandable
- Recognizes sounds in the environment – cars, dogs, vacuum, doorbell
- Has a vocabulary of 20 words or more

The South Dakota Newborn Hearing Screening Program.

The South Dakota Newborn Hearing Screening Program is a part of the Bright Start Initiative, a service that is provided by the South Dakota Department of Health to families with newborn infants as a group effort with hospitals, clinics, doctors and audiologists. Results will be reported to the South Dakota Department of Health.

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