

# Hearing aids and your child

## Information for parents and carers

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### Tips for parents

When a child first starts wearing any hearing aid, it is important they wear them regularly. This allows your child to get used to them, as well as allow you and the audiologist to monitor how much they're helping. Sometimes it can feel overwhelming to try to remember to insert the hearing aids daily however, once you begin to notice the improvements the hearing aids are making, this will become easier. Below are some tips for parents about how to help children to wear their hearing devices.

### Consistent use

Ideally, children should be wearing their hearing aids throughout their daytime waking hours however you should aim for your child to wear their hearing aids as much as they will tolerate. You know your child best, use the most appropriate technique that suits your child to help them wear the hearing aid consistently. You may need to change your technique as they grow up. Try to make the hearing aids part of your child's routine, for example, put the hearing aids in when they get up and take them out at night.

### Ease the sensation

Holding the ear moulds in your hand for a couple of minutes before putting can make them warmer, softer and easier to insert.

### Securing the hearing aid

Hearing aid retainers are advised if you have a young or very active child. This will not only secure the hearing aid to the ear but also stops them from slipping down. There is further information on this at the end of this booklet.

### Get in touch

We encourage meeting other families with a deaf child so that your child sees others wearing hearing devices which often will encourage them to wear their own hearing aid more consistently. Parents can talk to their Teacher of the Deaf about this, and they may be able to help put families in touch. Another good resource is linking in with the National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) information days where other families of children with hearing loss will be present.

### Who to contact if there is a problem

If you notice your child removing their hearing aids after loud noises or if they complain of sore ears, contact the paediatric audiology department (0131 312 1407) or Teacher of the Deaf. Sometimes your child may experience a high-pitched whistling sound from the hearing aid which is called feedback. This could be due to a loose-fitting mould, incorrectly inserted ear mould or brittle tubing, please contact the audiology department for a new mould or re tubing. Feedback can sometimes also be due to excess wax in the ear canal which can be checked by your child's GP.

## Frequently asked questions

### Why does my child try to remove their hearing aids?

Much like when a baby persistently removes their hat, once they find their hearing aids, they may remove them whilst testing out their motor skills. Infants who have worn hearing aids from birth may begin to try to remove hearing aids starting about six months of age as a part of exploring their own body, which includes being curious about hearing aids. Occasionally small children may remove them in order to generate a response from their parents however, with a great deal of positive reinforcement, this stage should pass.

### What can I do when my child removes their hearing aid?

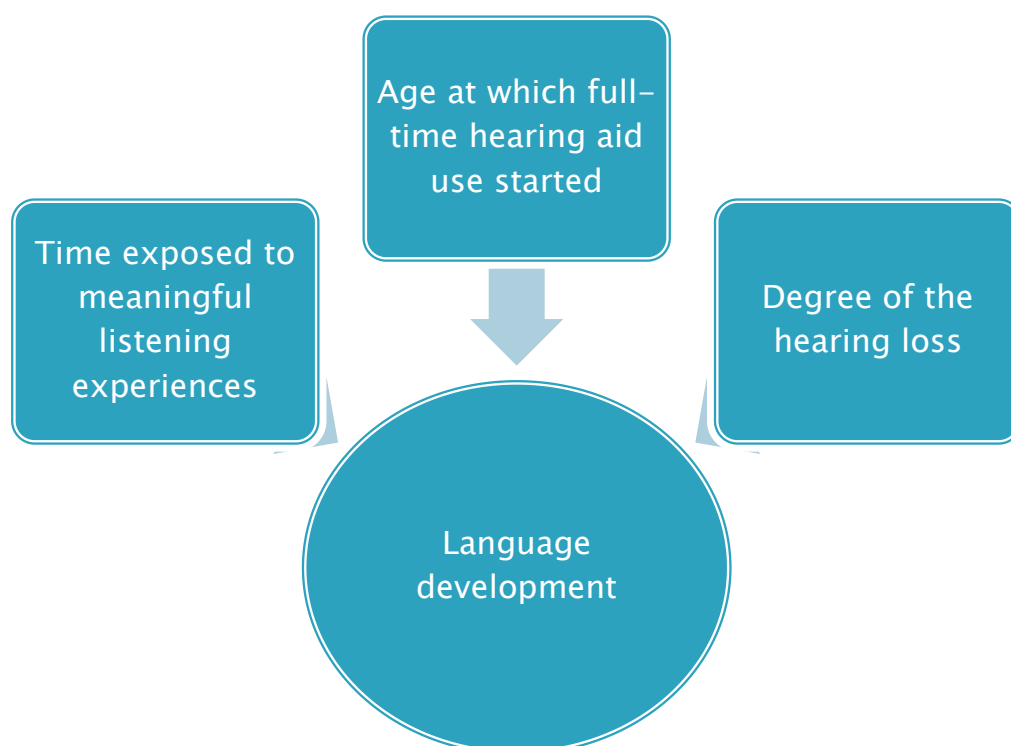
If you notice any redness or bruises in child's ears, rough patches or poorly fitting ear moulds, your child blinking or wincing with sounds or missing ling sounds during morning hearing aid checks, please contact department of Audiology.

If your baby takes off the hearing aids, after a minute or so, distract them with a new toy and once again put the hearing aid(s) back in their ears.

Routines give your child a sense of control over their life because they know what to expect. First, we brush our teeth, put on the hearing aids, then breakfast for example.

### Why the urgency? Why can't hearing aids wait?

Age adequate language plays a vital role in verbal communication. Language development in children with hearing loss can be affected depending on severity of hearing loss, usage of hearing aids and amount of language exposure.



## Importance of early access to sound

- Brain connections are made when a baby experiences the world through sound, sight, touch, taste, and smell. Before birth, children can hear at about 4 months gestation therefore when a child with hearing loss is born, they may already be behind their peers. Auditory stimulation (hearing) is necessary to develop the pathways in the brain that will lead to learning spoken language and before the critical age of development at 4 years' old.
- Wearing hearing aids for at least 10 hours per day helps children learn language faster than children who do not wear hearing aids consistently, making it more likely they will develop age appropriate language. Children who wear hearing aids less than 10 hours per day learn language at a slower rate and may fall behind.
- About 90% of what very young children know about the world is learned incidentally, casually and passively.
- Children with hearing loss require 3 times the exposure to learn new words and concepts due to their reduced ability to easily overhear the language used around them.
- Only through the concentrated effort of families, can children with hearing loss catch up and learn language at a rate similar to their peers.

## Some information about your child's hearing aid

### How can I make changes to the sound of the hearing aid?

When you turn the hearing aid on it will always start on your first programme and at the same volume. Unless you have been told otherwise, when you alter the programme or volume control on one aid it will automatically change the sound on the other side.

You can adjust the sound in the following ways:

#### 1. Different settings for different situations

Your child's hearing aid has a push button that allows you to select from different programmes for different settings.

There are a range of programmes we can set for you such as listening in, background noise, the loop system, music, and outdoor settings. Speak to your audiologist about these programmes if you think they might be helpful to your child.

#### 2. Turning the hearing aid up and down in volume

Your child's hearing aid will automatically change the volume depending upon the situation they are in. You can use the volume control on your child's hearing aid by turning the control up and down as needed. To increase the volume, press the top end of the toggle switch. To decrease the volume, press the bottom end. On some hearing aids, if the volume control is activated, the button on one side will turn the hearing aid up, and the button on the other side will turn the hearing down. Your audiologist will tell you how your child's volume control works.

**Please note that the programme button is not always activated for young children, and that this can be discussed with the audiologist.**

## Adapting to the hearing aid

### My child's hearing aid sounds strange; how can they get used to the sound of it?

It takes time to get used to new hearing aids. What your child will experience will depend on your child's hearing loss, their lifestyle and how much they wear their hearing aids. It may help to begin by wearing them for short periods and gradually increasing the wear time. It may take several months for their brain to get used to all the new sounds around them. Some families, however, find that their child enjoys their new listening abilities and are keen towards their hearing aids throughout the day.

When hearing aids are first worn, your child will need some time to get used to both the sound and feel of the hearing aids. Sometimes environmental sounds can be distracting when the hearing aids are first worn. Environmental noises which could be amplified by the hearing aids include the hum of a fridge, the ticking of a clock, and turning of a newspaper page. This is because their brain may not have heard these sounds at their correct levels for some time or not heard them before and it will take a little while for their brain to learn that this sound is normal.

Once your child is used to their hearing aids, their brain learns to recognise the new sounds and they become more acceptable. It is important to keep inserting the hearing aids consistently and, if you feel you need it, to ask for support from your audiologist.

**The more frequently your child wears their hearing aid, the quicker they will used to it. Please ask for support from your audiologist and / or your Teacher of the Deaf.**

## Accessories to help keep the hearing aid in place

Below is some information about accessories that may be helpful if you have a young or very active child. Known as **hearing aid retention accessories**, these can help keep the hearing aids in place.

### Ear Gear

- Spandex sleeve that slips over the hearing aid. It has a cord and a plastic locking clip.
- It does not block sound to hearing aid.
- Models are available for hearing aids, cochlear implants, and bone conduction hearing aids (BAHA).
- Models that attach to one or two hearing devices.



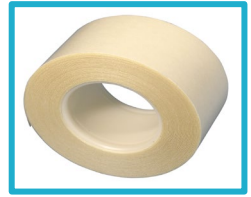
### Loops

- Loops slips over hearing device with a metal alligator clip.
- It can be used with hearing aids, cochlear implants, and BAHA.
- Models that attach to one or two hearing devices.



### Toupee tapes

- Tape specifically made for use on skin.
- They attach to hearing aid and skin.
- Must replace the tape on a regular basis to maintain security.
- This can be used on all hearing devices.



### Cap

- Caps that tie under the chin or behind the neck, creating security for hearing aids.
- Can be used with all hearing devices.



### Huggies

- Huggies are bands that attaches to the hearing aid/cochlear implant and loops around the ear.



### Headbands

- Headbands have pockets for hearing aids to slip into creating security for them.
- Can be used with hearing aids, cochlear implants, and BAHA.



### Oto Clips/Critter Clips

- Plastic loop security system with poly cotton cord and metal alligator type clip.
- Can be used with hearing aids, cochlear implants, and BAHA.
- Models that attach to one or two hearing devices.











## What you need to know when considering hearing aid retention accessories

We have explained about retention devices and their advantages and disadvantages. Below we have also provided some websites where you can find these devices.

Most of these devices need to be purchased by the family, but we are able to provide toupee tape, retention clips or huggies.

These are provided for information only and does not mean that we endorse these companies/resources.

Retention accessory and where to buy	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p><b>Ear gear</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.connevans.co.uk/catalogue/1233614/Ear-Gear">www.connevans.co.uk/catalogue/1233614/Ear-Gear</a></p>  <p><a href="https://smartear.eu/en/producers/ear-gear-1308137277">https://smartear.eu/en/producers/ear-gear-1308137277</a></p> 	<p>Flexible cord, full range of head movement.</p> <p>Plastic clip to clothing has no sharp edges, hypo allergenic and locking feature hence difficult to remove.</p> <p>Spandex sleeve protects from damage and from hearing aids being swallowed by infants.</p> <p>Increases comfort.</p> <p>Diminishes wind noise.</p> <p>Wide range of availability.</p> <p>Can be used for any ages.</p> <p>Prevents and assists in healing from chafing.</p>	<p>Some difficulty installing.</p> <p>Ear mould must be removed and then reattached.</p>
<p><b>Caps</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.etsy.com/uk/market/hearing_aid_pilot_cap">www.etsy.com/uk/market/hearing_aid_pilot_cap</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.angeliqueshearingbands.co.uk/">www.angeliqueshearingbands.co.uk/</a></p> <p><a href="https://definitelywild.co.uk/products/copy-of-cochlear-implant-hearing-aid-dino-be-brave-baby-hat-with-straps">https://definitelywild.co.uk/products/copy-of-cochlear-implant-hearing-aid-dino-be-brave-baby-hat-with-straps</a></p>   	<p>Secures the hearing aids and prevents them from falling.</p> <p>Discourage toddlers from taking the hearing aids off.</p> <p>Washable and durable.</p> <p>Caps can be fastened either by ties or Velcro.</p>	<p>Some caps do not allow full sound signals to reach the ear.</p> <p>Warm for summer or southern climate.</p>
<p><b>Headbands</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.angeliqueshearingbands.co.uk/">www.angeliqueshearingbands.co.uk/</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.malinka.me.uk">www.malinka.me.uk</a></p>  	<p>Especially effective for bone conduction hearing aids (BAHA) and cochlear implant processor in place near the ear.</p> <p>Modified version available to tuck the hearing aids into keeping the hearing aids and batteries safely out of child's mouth.</p> <p>Wide range of availability.</p>	<p>Can be dislodged when the child is lying down.</p>
<p><b>Toupee tape</b></p> <p>Can be provided at the department</p>	<p>Good short-term strategy.</p> <p>Does not require much of a tug to remove hearing aid.</p> <p>Helpful in preventing dislodging when child tries to explore or when the device is large/heavy for the child's ear.</p>	<p>Possible discomfort when removed.</p> <p>If used frequently, tape can be expensive overtime.</p> <p>Child could learn to shy away from hearing aid because of the discomfort when removed.</p>

<p><b>Oto-clips /Critter clips</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.hearingaidaccessories.co.uk/shop/hooks-clips-retentions/phonak-leo-the-lion-kids-clip/">www.hearingaidaccessories.co.uk/shop/hooks-clips-retentions/phonak-leo-the-lion-kids-clip/</a></p>  <p>Online store such as Amazon and E-bay</p>	<p>Low cost.</p> <p>Easy to install.</p> <p>One size fits all models and implants.</p> <p>Wide range of availability.</p> <p>Attractive, so helps encourage children to wear hearing aids.</p>	<p>Breaks easily.</p> <p>Security levels varies from one piece to another.</p> <p>Alligator clip has sharp teeth that may pinch child's skin.</p> <p>Clip has nickel content and can cause allergic reactions.</p>
<p><b>Loop/ Clips</b></p> <p>Retention clips can be provided at the department</p>	<p>Prevents child from taking the hearing aid off.</p> <p>No discomfort when removed.</p> <p>Easy to install.</p> <p>One size fits all hearing aid and cochlear implant models.</p> <p>Wide range of availability.</p>	<p>Cord does not flex hence limiting the range of head movement.</p> <p>Security level varies.</p> <p>One size fitting all hearing devices.</p> <p>Alligator clip has sharp teeth that may pinch child's skin.</p> <p>Clip has nickel content hence can cause allergic reactions.</p>

## More information

Below are some websites which you might find it useful:

**National Deaf Children's Society**

[www.ndcs.org.uk](http://www.ndcs.org.uk)



**The Elizabeth Foundation**

[www.elizabeth-foundation.org](http://www.elizabeth-foundation.org)



## References

OCHL study web page resources - [Comprehensive audiological management of HL in children, including mild and unilateral hearing loss - PMC \(nih.gov\)](#)

Improving Hearing and Hearing Aid Retention for Infants and Young Children: A practical survey and study of hearing aid retention products, Mar 6, 2014 | [Research](#)

Understanding your hearing aid (information for patients)- NHS Tayside

Getting your child to wear their hearing aids and cochlear implants – National Deaf Childrens Society

