



BACKGROUND

Since 2009, the Infant Hearing Education, Assessment, Reporting and Referral (IHEARR) Act requires all newborns to be screened for hearing loss, unless the parent refuses. The Division of Newborn Screening and Genetics (DNSG) works to make sure all newborns are screened for hearing loss within 1 month of age, are diagnosed within 3 months of age, and receive prescribed treatment or intervention services within 6 months of age. If a newborn's hearing loss is not found and treated, the child may be delayed in learning to speak or using sign language, have problems learning at school, or have social and emotional difficulties.

WHEN IS THE HEARING SCREENING PERFORMED?

Hearing screening should be performed 24-48 hours after birth. If your newborn is in the NICU, screening should be performed before the baby leaves the hospital once medically stable.

HOW IS THE HEARING SCREENING PERFORMED?

There are two ways to complete a hearing screening. The first is an Otoacoustic Emissions (OAE) test, which looks at the your baby's inner ear response to determine if the newborn is hearing properly. The second is an Auditory Brainstem Response (ABR), which measures your baby's inner ear and nerve response to sound.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN IF MY BABY PASSED THE HEARING SCREENING?

If your baby passes the newborn hearing screening, you do not need more testing at this time. Just remember, your baby's hearing does not have to be perfect to pass. A small number of babies who pass the newborn hearing screening can lose their hearing, suddenly or gradually, before they reach the age of 1. If permanent childhood hearing loss is common in your family, you should contact a pediatric audiologist to find out when follow-up is needed. If you think your child may have a hearing loss or are concerned about your child's communication development, you should reach out to your child's primary care provider for guidance on next steps and contact CONNECT Helpline: 1-800-692-7288 to access your county Early Intervention program.

WHAT DOES A REFERRED (FAILED) HEARING SCREENING RESULT MEAN?

There may be several reasons why your baby did not pass the hearing screening:

- Your baby has a hearing loss—either temporary or permanent.
- Your baby was too active or did not sleep during the hearing screening.
- The room was too noisy when your baby had his/her hearing screening to get good screening results.

This means your baby needs to have a full diagnostic audiologic evaluation to determine if there is a hearing loss. A diagnostic audiologic evaluation, performed by a pediatric audiologist, should take place before 3 months of age so that your baby can get help learning speech and language during the first few months of life. You can find a pediatric audiologist near you through [EHDI-PALS](#).

WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE IF MY CHILD IS DIAGNOSED WITH A PERMANENT HEARING LOSS?

- With the help of your child's audiologist or doctor, enroll your child in [Early Intervention](#).
- Enroll in Family Connections for Language and Learning, serving families of children who are deaf/hard of hearing, an affiliate program of Parent to Parent of PA. Referrals can be made by calling the program coordinator at 717-580-0839.