

Audiology

Department; the Paediatric Audiology Service

What happens next?

After you are told your child has a hearing loss, you will have many questions, including wanting to know what happens next.

What can my child hear?

- The age and developmental abilities of your child will have determined how much knowledge about the hearing loss your Audiologist has been able to collect.
- With very young children, the information we have is often very limited. Your Audiologist will make assumptions about the loss based upon information gained from other children with similar losses.
- As children get older, they are able to provide us with more details about their hearing. Some of this information will be obtained in the Audiology clinic. Other information is obtained from observations made by you and family members, at home and staff at nursery or school.
- Your Audiologist should explain in everyday language what your child can hear, and give you advice about how to make hearing easier for your child.

What are the treatment options?

- For some hearing losses, medical or surgical treatment may be an option. Your Audiologist will make the referral to an Ear, Nose & Throat Specialist for you, if appropriate.
- For some losses, managing your child's listening environment may be an option. This means being aware of the circumstances in which your child will have difficulty hearing and making sure you and others change your behaviour to make hearing easier for your child. For example, turning the television down and speaking clearly in a slightly raised voice.
- For some losses, using hearing aids may be an option. Hearing aids will make sounds and speech loud enough to be heard by your child. Your Audiologist can discuss this in detail with you, if appropriate.
- For some losses, a combination of the above options may be appropriate.

Should any other referrals be made?

Your consent must be given **before** any referrals to other specialists can be made. In some instances, consent must be given in writing.

- **Hearing Support Service – Visiting Teacher of the Deaf (ToD).** Your Audiologist may recommend contacting this service. They are able to provide hands on and day to day advice about how to cope with the hearing loss. They are also able to provide advice and / or information to nursery and school staff when necessary.
- **Ear, Nose & Throat Specialist (ENT).** An ENT specialist should see your child at least once, to ensure all medical considerations have been addressed. Your ENT specialist can also arrange appropriate investigations into the cause of your child's hearing loss.
- **Genetic Counselling.** Your ENT specialist can make a referral. This is usually requested if a family history of hearing loss seems likely, and more children are planned, or if your child has other difficulties that are likely to be linked to the hearing loss.
- **Paediatrician.** In some circumstances your Audiologist may suggest a referral to a Paediatrician for a general assessment of your child abilities.
- **Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT).** Referrals to a speech and language therapist with experience working with children who have a hearing loss can be requested from your Teacher of the Deaf (ToD).
- **Social Services.** A referral is not required. You can approach Social Services directly yourself. They can provide support and information about any financial help you or your child are entitled to.
- **National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS).** Your Audiologist will probably suggest you make contact with this voluntary organisation. If you have access to the Internet, the NDCS website is worth viewing. The information, advice and support they provide is unbiased and helpful:
 - Email: helpline@ndcs.org.uk
 - Website: www.ndcs.org.uk
 - Helpline: 0207 250 0123

How often will my child's hearing be checked?

The frequency of follow up appointments is determined by the age of your child and the Audiology care plan you have made with your Audiologist.

- Babies are usually seen in audiology at least once every three months.
- Toddlers and small children at least six monthly.
- Older children and teenagers at least once a year.
- Children with hearing aids often need additional, short, intermediate appointments to ensure good hearing aid fit is maintained.
- Occasionally, parental concerns arise between appointments. You simply need to contact the Audiology department requesting an appointment.

Should I / we consider sign language?

- When a child has significant language difficulties due to hearing loss, using some basic signs makes communication easier.
- Many signs are identical to gestures we all regularly use, for example waving means goodbye. Your Teacher of the Deaf will be able to show you some useful, simple signs to begin with.
- Learning and using a few signs for everyday requests and activities, will reduce the frustration your child feels when trying to communicate with you.
- Learning and using a few signs for everyday requests and activities, will **not** delay your child's development of spoken language.
- Your Audiologist can discuss this in detail with you, and advise you whether or not this is appropriate.



We are currently working towards a smoke free site. Smoking is only permitted in the designated smoking areas.

For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169

Help with this leaflet:



If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio format, please ask the department to contact Patient Information: 01223 216032 or

patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk



Document history

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