

HOW'S MY CHILD DOING?

HOW HEARING, LANGUAGE, & SPEECH ARE CONNECTED

Do you have any of these concerns?

- My child responds to my voice sometimes, but not consistently.
- My child responds better to louder voices and sounds.
- My child understands me better if I gesture when I talk.
- My child needs to watch me when I talk.
- My child's speech is not easy to understand.
- My child does not seem to be talking as much as other children of the same age.

What does my child's hearing have to do with their language and speech?

Children learn to talk through listening to people talk. If a child cannot hear well, this makes it difficult to develop age-appropriate language and speech.

But my child passed newborn hearing screening!

Hearing loss can occur at any age.

Typical Hearing, Language, & Speech Milestones:

6 months

- Responds to sounds by making sounds
- Responds to own name
- Babbles with different sounds (e.g. ah, m, buh buh, aga)

1 year

- Has 1 or 2 meaningful words
- Responds to spoken requests
- Tries to say words you say
- Makes a variety of speech-like sounds

2 years

- Points to things or pictures when named
- Uses 2 to 4 word sentences
- Repeats words heard in conversation

3 years

- Understood by strangers most of the time
- Speaks mostly in full sentences
- Follows 2-3 step directions without gestures

Possible risk factors for hearing loss:

- Born premature (earlier than 38 weeks)
- Spent time in the NICU
- Had infections such as meningitis or cytomegalovirus (CMV)
- Was given medications that can possibly lead to hearing loss
- Had medical complications at birth
- Has history of many ear infections
- Has family members with childhood hearing loss in one or both ears
- Has a genetic syndrome or craniofacial anomalies

<http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/hear.html>

I'm concerned about my child's hearing, language, or speech.

What should I do?

- Share your concerns with your child's pediatrician.
- Schedule your child for a hearing test with an audiologist who specializes in working with young children to rule out hearing loss before beginning speech and language services.

Where can I get more information?

- Centers for Disease Control: cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones
- National Institute of Health: nidcd.nih.gov/health/ear-infections-children
- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association: asha.org/public/hearing/Effects-of-Hearing-Loss-on-Development
- Connecticut Department of Public Health: ct.gov/dph/cwp/view.asp?a=3138&q=527754
- Child Development Infoline, United Way of CT: cdi.211ct.org

QUESTIONS FOR MY PEDIATRICIAN:

WHAT CAN I DO?

1. **Schedule your child for a hearing test with an audiologist who specializes in working with young children to rule out hearing loss before beginning speech and language services. Your child's brain depends on consistent and clear auditory access to develop speech and language.**
2. **Minimize background noise. Your child may not be able to hear what you are saying with the TV or radio on.**
3. **Stay close when talking to your child. The closer you are, the better your child can hear and see you.**
4. **TALK, READ, & SING with your child every day. Young children need good language models all day, every day to develop strong speech and language skills.**
5. **Don't wait. The earlier you get help for your child, the better the outcomes.**