

What will happen if my child has a hearing loss?

About two out of 1000 babies will have a hearing loss. If your baby is diagnosed with a hearing loss, the audiologist will explain the type of hearing loss, the sounds the baby will be able to hear, as well as the sounds the baby might not hear, and how the hearing loss may affect speech and language development. IHP will provide support for communication development, as well as the services of a Family Support Worker if you wish.

Can hearing loss happen later in my child's life?

About three to four children out of 1000 will have a hearing loss by five years of age that may affect their speech, language, reading, and social development. It is important to have your child's hearing tested by an audiologist if you have any concerns about hearing, speech and/or language development.

Where can I go for more information?

www.ontario.ca/infanthearing



Newborn hearing screening: Parents are important partners

Information for parents before their baby is born

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February 2014 © Queen's Printer for Ontario

What is Newborn Hearing Screening?

The Ontario Infant Hearing Program (IHP) is a provincewide program of the Ministry of Children and Youth Services that screens babies for hearing loss soon after birth. Screening takes place in the hospital or in a community-based setting. The program is designed to:

- Identify all infants with hearing loss soon after birth.
- Provide services and support to children who are deaf or hard of hearing, so families can make informed decisions regarding hearing technology (e.g., hearing aids), signed or manual languages (e.g., American Sign Language) and other approaches for communication development. These services support the development of language and early literacy so children are ready to start school.
- Monitor those babies at risk of early childhood hearing loss.

Why does my baby need hearing screening at birth?

Most babies are born ready to hear their parents' voices and the sounds of the world around them. Babies with hearing loss have the same need for early access to a stimulating language environment as babies with normal hearing. Identifying hearing loss shortly after birth is important. It allows families to work with health care professionals to determine the best way to help their child learn language and avoid delays in communication and social development.

How is the hearing screen performed?

An IHP hearing screener with specialized training will perform a hearing screen for your baby in the hospital or in a community-based setting. This screen is fast and safe. Soft-level sounds are played by a computer into your baby's ears using a soft tip. Many babies will sleep during the screen.

What if my baby does not pass the hearing screen?

If your baby has a "refer" result from the initial hearing screen, then they will have a second hearing screen before you leave the hospital or in a community location shortly after you leave. If the second screen also has a "refer" result, you will be scheduled for a more advanced hearing test. The hearing test will be performed by an IHP audiologist who has the knowledge and skills to identify and treat hearing loss in children. It is very important that you go to this appointment because treating hearing loss early in life helps your child develop speech, language, reading and social skills that are important for school and overall health.

