



# Daily Listening Checks for Babies

**What is a listening check?** A listening check is when you make sure your baby is hearing and noticing the specific speech sounds you say to your baby (without your baby seeing you), right after you put on your baby's hearing technology.

## Why should I do a daily listening check?

The reasons to do daily listening checks are:

1) to make sure your baby's hearing technologies are consistently transmitting complete speech information to your baby's brain to activate and grow neural connections, and 2) to confirm that your baby is noticing and actually listening to that speech information.

## How often should I do a listening check?

A listening check should be done once a day, every day, right after you put the hearing devices on your baby. There's no need to repeat the check during the day unless you notice that your baby is not responding as expected.

## What materials/speech sounds are used?

The Ling six sounds are always used for the listening check, beginning in infancy and continuing throughout childhood.

## What are the Ling six testing sounds?

1. /m/ as in me
2. /ah/ as in hot
3. /oo/ as in boot
4. /ee/ as in feet
5. /sh/ as in shoe
6. /s/ as in sun

## Why are these particular speech sounds used?

Each of these six sounds is intended to cover a complete range of speech sounds from low (for example, 'm' and 'oo') to high frequency – such as 'sh' and 's' sounds. Frequency is commonly known as 'pitch.' If your baby can hear all of these six sounds, your baby probably can hear you speak, sing, and read to them ... especially if the room is quiet and you are close by.

## How should I say the sounds?

The sounds should be spoken at a normal conversational volume, without the baby seeing your mouth. Do not exaggerate the sounds by making them loud or long, or by repeating them over and over. However, when your baby is an infant, you can make the sounds more interesting by adding a sing-song melody to each sound. As your baby gets older, the six sounds need to be presented at the same loudness and duration as they would be if the sounds were used in a word. Say the sounds in a different order each day. For example, one time you might begin saying the six sounds with /ah/, and the next time you might begin with /oo/. Be sure to pause after you say each sound to give your baby time to respond. Your pediatric audiologist and/or your early interventionist can work with you as you learn to do the daily listening check.



# DAILY LISTENING CHECKS FOR BABIES

## **How close should I be to my baby when I say the sounds?**

When your baby is a newborn, you can begin by holding your baby. When they respond at this very close distance, you can then place your baby in an infant carrier and move to a typical conversational distance – 3 to 6 feet away. As your baby gets older, you can move halfway across the room.

## **How do I know my baby heard the six Ling sounds?**

This is the fun part. You closely watch your baby to observe changes in your baby's behavior after you say each sound. For example, if your baby is sucking on a pacifier or a nipple, the baby might stop sucking after you say the sound. On the other hand, if your baby is not sucking, they might start sucking after you say the sound. Or, if your baby is very still, they might move a little after they hear you. If the baby is lightly sleeping, they might open their eyes after you say a sound. If your baby is moving a bit, they might stop moving after you say a sound. Your baby may look for the sound by moving their eyes. Be sure to pause after you say a sound to give your baby time to respond – babies do not respond as quickly as adults.

## **Should the room be quiet?**

Yes, in the earliest months, the room should be very quiet. Turn off the TV, computer, dishwasher, and so on. You don't want any other sounds conflicting with the six sounds you are saying.

## **What if I don't notice behavioral changes in my baby after I say a sound?**

If your baby is not responding to one or more of the six sounds, contact your pediatric audiologist right away to problem-solve the situation. There could be an issue with your baby's hearing technology, or your baby's doorway/hearing may have changed. It is extremely important that auditory information reaches your baby's brain to activate and grow critical neural connections ... so any problem needs to be analyzed and treated right away.