

CAN YOUR BABY HEAR YOU?

Do you have concerns about your baby's hearing? Let's talk about it. What you should know, what to notice or observe and when you should talk to a medical professional or make an appointment with a pediatric audiologist.

I'm Dr. Teresa Caraway with Hearing First. Hearing is critical to your baby's brain development, so it's important for every parent to know the status of their baby's hearing. Why? Because hearing builds a foundation for learning, spoken language and literacy. If you have concerns about your baby's hearing, this video is for you. We'll talk about some things to look for and what steps you can take.

First, did your baby have a newborn hearing screening and do you know the results? If they failed or you're not sure of the results of their screening, follow up right away. Maybe your baby passed their hearing screening at birth and now you have concerns about their hearing. What are some of those indicators that you should get those little ears tested?

Well, if your baby is not responding to quiet sounds, or startling at loud sounds, cooing and babbling a lot and then they're stopping or decreasing or becoming quieter, maybe after six months of age, they're not turning to sound, or responding when you call their name and you don't observe them consistently responding to sounds. By one year of age, they should have simple vocabulary words, such as mama and dada, and not having these would be an indicator, as well as not following or not meeting their developmental milestones.

The important thing is not to wait. If you have questions or concerns that your baby might not be hearing, ask your pediatrician for a referral for a hearing evaluation as soon as possible. Hearing is so important for your child's brain development, so you want to act urgently if you have a concern.

At the time of your baby's newborn hearing screening, it might have been recommended that their hearing be re-screened regularly due to known risk factors, like time spent in the NICU, or a family history of hearing loss. Make sure you maintain those appointments, so you always know the status of your baby's hearing.

The bottom line, trust your instincts and talk to your baby's doctor. Tell them you're worried and ask for a referral to a pediatric audiologist for a hearing evaluation. If you need to, you can also directly contact a pediatric audiologist yourself to schedule an appointment.

Remember, these early days for your baby are a critically important time for their brain development. As they learn and grow, you will want your little one to have all the wonderful listening and language opportunities their brain needs, from lullabies and I love yous, to story time and peek-a-boos.

If you're wanting more information, click the link below to learn about how hearing is tested, so you feel confident in your next steps. Hearing First is here to help you every step of the way. Subscribe to the YouTube channel for the latest videos and visit hearingfirst.org to find more resources and support on this journey.