

SIMPLE WAYS TO CHECK YOUR CHILD'S HEARING LOSS FOR A PROGRESSIVE LOSS

As your child with hearing loss is learning and growing, you're excited to see their progress in listening and talking skills. But what happens if you notice they're not responding to sound like they had been previously? Or if their progress suddenly slows? You always want to check their hearing technology and make sure that it's in good working order. Then your next step is an appointment with the pediatric audiologist. Sometimes a hearing loss can progress, or their hearing can change over time. Let's talk more about that and what you should look for and your next steps.

I'm Dr. Teresa Caraway with Hearing First, we're here to help and support families just like yours who have a child with hearing loss. We want to empower you as your child learns to listen, talk, read and thrive just like kids with typical hearing.

If your child is no longer responding to sound or you notice their progress has slowed, you'll want to make sure they still have access to all the sounds of speech that helps grow their little brain. So, what's the best way to do that? The Ling 6 Sound Test. It's an easy way to make sure that they don't miss a moment of listening and learning. It's a quick test to make sure your child can hear the speech sounds across the frequencies. *Ah, ee, mmm, oo, sh, ssss.*

Many parents have found success in making the Ling 6 Sound Test part of their routine immediately after they put their child's devices on. I know mornings with little ones can be a bit busy, but I promise this quick check is worth it. Try recording your child's responses in a notebook or on your phone so that you can easily track and share with your team. If you notice that your child is no longer responding the same way that they have been, maybe to a specific sound like the ss sound. Take note of that. Is this a one-time thing that's happening today or is it now happening consistently? If it's clear that they're no longer hearing that sound or if you aren't sure, first, always check their devices.

Make sure the device is working. The batteries are fully charged and listen to the device the way your audiologist may have shown you. If those devices are in full working order, then talk with your pediatric audiologist right away to share the changes in your child's responses to sound that you have observed, and you're concerned about.

I don't want you to worry, but you should be aware that it is possible that hearing can change over time and the hearing loss can worsen. If this is the case, your pediatric audiologist may diagnose your child as having a progressive hearing loss. Always talk with your team about your child's diagnosis and what it

means. Today's technology is so advanced that we now have a continuum of hearing devices available to provide your child with access to the sounds of speech that their little brain needs so they can listen, talk, read, and thrive.

What should you be looking for? Well, you'll want to catch a potential progressive hearing loss as soon as possible because your child's listening and spoken language development depends on access to clear speech, in addition to changes in their responses to the Ling 6 Sound Test during your daily listening checks.

Well, there are some other things to look for. Talk to your professional team if your child is not responding to sounds that they previously heard and have responded to, has changes in their speech, maybe they're vocalizing less, perhaps missing certain sounds in words or sentences that they're producing, or they may be just a little bit more difficult to understand when they're speaking. Struggles to understand simple directions that they have previously understood, taking their hearing devices off more than before or has sudden changes in behavior.

Ask caregivers and teachers and other family members and anyone who spends time with your child to regularly share with you if they notice your child is no longer responding in the same way to certain sounds. Again, these aren't necessarily indicators your child has a progressive hearing loss, but it's always better to talk to your team about what you notice, what you're observing about your child's hearing, so that you can take action early and ensure they are hearing all the sounds of speech their brain needs.

Now, what are your next steps? Well, if you notice something, act quickly so they don't miss a moment of listening and learning. Anytime you have questions or concerns about your child's hearing, talk to your professional team. They want to help you and support you and your child to reach their full potential, and it all starts with hearing.

A progressive loss may come as a surprise, but you can be assured that with careful monitoring, you can catch it quickly. And today's continuum of technology from hearing aids to cochlear implants your child can have access to all the sounds of speech through their ears. Click the link below to learn more about how to conduct the Ling 6 Sound Test with your child.

Wherever you are in this journey and however you may be feeling, you are not alone. Hearing First is here to help you every step of the way. Subscribe on YouTube for the latest videos and visit hearingfirst.org to find more resources and support on this journey. See you next time.