

Family Path



BC Early Hearing Program

A service of BC Children's Hospital
and the Provincial Health Services Authority

Baby born

Hearing screening

- A quick check by a Hearing Screener* to find out about your baby's hearing.
- Screening may be done in the hospital or community.
- Screening may take more than one appointment to complete.
- Ask your Community Health Nurse for more information about hearing screening.

Comprehensive hearing testing

- If your baby's hearing screening results are unclear, an Audiologist* will do more hearing testing.
- If you wish, the audiologist will share the results with your Community Health Nurse, Community Health Rep. or other community support workers.
- If your baby is at risk for hearing loss later in life, you can take your baby for regular checks at Public Health Hearing clinics.



Before 3 months of age

If baby has a hearing loss what happens now?

- An Early Communication Coordinator* will contact you to answer any questions about hearing loss and early communication.
- The Coordinator will help you to find services that will help you and your baby.
- If you wish, the Coordinator will also work with your Community Health Nurse or other community supports.

- The Coordinator can help you connect with other parents who have children with hearing loss (Guide By Your Side). This helps you learn from their experience.
- You may have follow-up doctor and audiology appointments (may include hearing aid services) during these first few months.

Between 3 and 6 months

Family begins early support services for communication development

First Steps

- You can work with an Early Communication Specialist* (early communication specialist may also be called early interventionist).
- The Early Communication Specialist can share ideas, encouraging your baby's early communication development.
- You may also find it helpful to have an Aboriginal Infant Development Consultant* involved.

Ongoing

- You can continue to meet with the Early Communication Specialist for support and information (about hearing loss, helping baby learn to communicate, choices to consider).
- You may have more appointments with audiologists (may include further testing, and hearing aid services, including earmolds*).
- The Early Communication Specialist, the audiologist, and other people who support you will help you watch your baby's development and share ideas and information.



Between 6 and 9 months

First planning meeting with you

You, the Early Communication Specialist, the audiologist, and other support team members meet to discuss the needs of your baby and family and how best to meet those needs. Together you develop a plan called the Individualized Family Service Plan. This plan includes:

- Specialists and supports you would like to have involved
- How often you and your baby will meet with different workers from your support team
- Areas of your baby's development that you want to focus on (e.g. listening, communication, language)
- What progress your family and early support team expect to see at the end of six months

Beyond 9 months



- You will continue to learn new ways to help your baby communicate and develop.
- You and your early support team will continue to watch your baby's progress in all areas.
- Your baby's service and support plan will be reviewed every six months and changes made as needed.
- You and your baby may continue to see your audiologist for hearing testing and hearing equipment services.

21 month check-up

- This is an important check-up.
- The 21 month check gives you and your early support team information to make decisions. This is important if you and your team have concerns.
- If your baby or family require additional supports, you and your team may consider:

- Changing how often you and your early communication specialist meet
- Trying different approaches to better accommodate baby's development
- Reviewing your baby's hearing equipment - is it working properly? How often is it used?
- Other supports available to your baby and family such as the Sunny Hill Hearing Loss Team* or the Well-Being Program*

At any time

Families know their child best. Throughout the process of supporting a child with hearing loss, the family and team share ideas to find what works best to meet the needs of the child and family.

Babies are never too young to start early communication services. Babies with hearing loss typically do best when the family and early communication specialist start working together as soon as possible.

Families and team can discuss additional resources that may be available (e.g. consultation with Cochlear Implant team at BC Children's Hospital, Sunny Hill Hearing Loss team, Well-Being Program).



Other important resources for families:

Aboriginal Patient Liaison can provide:

- Support and comfort for families with appointments at BC Children's Hospital or Sunny Hill Health Centre for Children
- Information about First Nations rights and benefits

☎ Call: 604-875-3440 or (toll free) 1-800-331-1533



OTITIS MEDIA: Ear aches and ear infections

What is Otitis Media?

- Fluid or pressure build-up behind the ear drum, in the middle part of the ear
- Sometimes middle-ear fluid can become infected

What are some signs of Otitis Media?

- Sometimes ear ache, irritability, fever, poor feeding, less responsive than usual to speech or other sound

Why is this important?

- Fluid behind the eardrum can block sounds, making it even more difficult to listen and understand

What should parents do if they suspect their baby has Otitis Media?

- Parents should talk with their family doctor, audiologist, or Community Health Nurse



Definitions: people

Hearing Screener: The person who gives the screening to your baby in the hospital or local hearing clinic.

Audiologist: The person who tests your baby's hearing and can select and fit hearing equipment if needed. The Audiologist will monitor your baby's hearing and help you observe your baby's development of listening skills over time.

Early Communication Coordinator: The Coordinator provides initial support and answers your questions about hearing loss and communication development. They can also assist you to find appropriate services that will help you and your baby.

Parent Guide: All of the parent guides have children with hearing loss. They can help give you emotional support and information. Guide By Your Side is a Hands and Voices program that is offered free to families in BC as part of the BC Early Hearing Program.

Early Communication Specialist: This person can provide you with information about early baby communication. They can help you watch your baby's progress and can share ideas for ways to encourage your baby's communication development. This person may be a speech-language therapist, auditory verbal therapist, or a teacher of the deaf/hard of hearing.

Aboriginal Infant Development Consultant: This person can support you through home visits and play groups and can help assess your baby's and family's needs. This person can refer you to other community resources that you might find helpful.

Sign Language Teacher: If you decide to use sign language with your baby, a sign language teacher can help you learn sign language. Usually the teacher is Deaf and may share information about Deaf culture and the Deaf community.

Definitions: other

Earmold: This is the part of the hearing aid that is specially made to fit the shape of your baby's ear. It helps direct the amplified sound into the ear. Your baby will need new earmolds as his/her ears grow and mature.

Sunny Hill Health Centre for Children: This Centre has a Hearing Loss Team and is located in Vancouver. This team of specialists can provide developmental assessments that might not be available in your community. Your Community Health Nurse or other Health worker can help you get more information by calling: ☎ 604-453-8300 and asking for the Hearing Loss Team.

Well Being Program: This program provides free family counseling to families who have a member who is deaf or hard of hearing. Your Community Health Nurse or other Health worker can help you get more information by calling: ☎ 604-456-0900.

Your notes and important contact information:

Your Community Health Nurse/Community Health Rep:

Your Audiologist:

Your Early Communication Specialist:

Your Family Doctor:

Other Supports/Contacts:

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For more information:

Contact the BC Early Hearing Program Office

☎ Toll free at 1-866-612-2347

