

Hearing Loss Affects Kids, Too

Three million children under 18 years old suffer from hearing loss, including nearly four of every one thousand newborn babies.* In most cases, hearing issues aren't discovered in kids until they are at least two years old.

The first two years of a child's life are hugely important in physical development as well as in forming emotional, learning and communication skills. Because of this, babies with moderate to severe hearing loss often experience major developmental setbacks.

Infant hearing loss is very difficult to detect, which is why many cases go undiagnosed until the child reaches talking age. Symptoms include:

- Not responding to their name.
- Not imitating sound.
- Not turning their head to the direction of your voice.
- Not babbling.

The best way to identify and treat hearing loss is to take your child to an audiologist for a hearing screening. Common hearing tests for babies and children include:

- **Auditory brainstem response (ABR)** provides an audiologist with information on a child's inner ear and the neuronal pathway that connects the ear to the brain. Electrodes are placed on the child's head to record brain activity in response to sounds.
- **Otoacoustic emissions (OAE)** testing uses a microphone and earphone to calculate an infant's hearing abilities by measuring the reflection of a sound's echo as it passes through the ear canal. Otoacoustic emissions are the sounds given off by the inner ear when stimulated by sound.
- **Tympanometry** is a test of the middle ear used to detect fluid, wax buildup, eardrum perforations and tumors. It measures movement of the eardrum in response to air pressure; the results are recorded on a chart called a tympanogram.
- **Acoustic reflex tests** measure involuntary muscle contractions of the middle ear and is used to determine the location of your hearing problem (the ossicles, cochlea, auditory nerve, etc.) as well as the type of hearing loss.

Take advantage of this opportunity to care for your child's hearing health. Schedule a hearing evaluation today.

* <http://www.entnet.org/node/1255>