

Some Things a Baby with Normal Hearing Should Be Able to Do:

Birth to 3 Months of Age

- Blinks or jumps when there is a sudden, loud sound
- Quiets or smiles when spoken to
- Makes sounds like “ohh”, “ahh”

6 to 9 Months of Age

- Turns head toward loud sounds
- Understands “no-no” or “bye-bye”
- Babbles, for example “baba,” “mama,” “gaga”

9 to 12 Months of Age

- Repeats simple words and sounds you make
- Correctly uses “mama” or “dada”
- Responds to singing or music
- Points to favorite toys and objects when asked

If you have questions about your baby's hearing or this list, talk with your baby's health professional.

Where Else Can I Get Information?

Visit www.babyhearing.org

The Kansas Newborn Hearing Screening Program

The Kansas Newborn Hearing Screening Program, is a service provided by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to families with newborn infants in collaboration with participating hospitals, doctors, and audiologists. Results are reported to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

Kansas Department of Health
and Environment

SoundBeginnings

Early Hearing Detection &
Intervention Program

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SoundBeginnings

The Kansas Newborn Hearing Screening Program

Why Should My Baby's Hearing Be Screened?

One out of every 250 babies has a significant hearing loss at birth. Hearing loss in babies is easy to overlook because it is not visible and babies cannot tell us they are unable to hear. In 1999, Kansas enacted legislation, mandating screening for the detection of hearing loss in every child within 5 days of birth, unless medically indicated.

Babies learn from the time they are born. One of the ways to learn is through hearing. If they have problems with hearing and do not receive the right treatment and early intervention services, babies will have trouble with language development.

Some parents think that they would be able to tell if their baby could not hear. This is not always the case. Babies may respond to noise by startling or turning their heads toward the sound. This does not mean they have normal hearing. Most babies with hearing loss can hear some sounds but still not enough to develop full speaking ability.

Newborn hearing makes a difference for all children and their families. It is important for you to be sure that your baby has normal hearing. The first six months of life are the most critical for speech and language development.

How do they screen my baby's hearing?

A baby's hearing can be screened within 24 hours of life. There are two types of hearing screening tests: Auditory Brainstem Response (ABR) and Otoacoustic Emissions (OAE). Both tests are harmless, take only a few minutes to complete, and most babies sleep through the hearing screening.

Auditory Brainstem Response (AABR) –

Uses miniature earphones and sensors (placed on the head, neck, and shoulder) that measures your baby's brainwaves to determine if sounds are heard normally.

Otoacoustic Emission (OAE) –

Uses a soft ear probe and a miniature microphone to measure the "echo" that the ear makes as it sends sound to the brain.

Both tests are quick (5-10 minutes), painless, and may be done while your baby is sleeping or lying still.

What if my baby does not pass the screening?

If your baby does not pass the hearing screen at birth, it does not necessarily mean that your baby has hearing loss. But to be sure, it is extremely important to have further testing. This should include

a more thorough hearing evaluation and a medical evaluation. These tests should be done as soon as possible, but definitely before your baby is 3 months old. These tests can confirm whether hearing is normal or not.

What if my baby passes the screening?

Passing the hearing screening indicates that your baby does not need additional testing at this time. Some children with a family history of hearing loss, recurrent ear infections or serious illness may develop hearing loss later in childhood.

If at any time, you have concerns about your child's hearing ability, speech or language development, ask your baby's doctor for referral to an audiologist or Ear Nose and Throat (ENT) doctor to arrange for a hearing evaluation.

What if my baby did not receive a hearing screen as a newborn?

If your baby did not receive a hearing screen, call your baby's doctor and ask to have your baby screened. Hearing can be screened at any age.