



## Confirmed hearing loss in babies and children

A diagnosis of deafness can be very unexpected as most deaf babies and children are born to families who are new to deafness. This parent tip will give you some practical advice to help you, your baby or child, and your family.

Deafness, or hearing loss, happens when one or more parts of the ear aren't working effectively. The terms 'deaf', 'deafness' and 'hearing loss' are used in place of each other to refer to all types of hearing loss from mild to profound. This includes deafness in one ear or short-term hearing loss such as glue ear.

### What level of deafness does my baby or child have?

- Level of deafness helps you to understand what your baby or child can hear.
- Every baby, child and family will experience deafness in a different way.
- Your audiologist (hearing specialist) will be able to give you more information about your baby or child's deafness.
- Your audiologist can give you a written report which you can share with your family, health visitor, GP, childminder, or preschool.

### Types of hearing loss:

- **Mild Hearing Loss** - may hear some speech sounds but soft sounds are hard to hear.
- **Moderate Hearing Loss** - may hear some speech when another person is talking at a normal level.
- **Severe Hearing Loss** - will hear no speech of a person talking at a normal level and only some loud sounds.
- **Profound Hearing Loss** - will not hear any speech and only very loud sounds.

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For additional Parent Tips see [www.ihv.org.uk](http://www.ihv.org.uk)

The information in this resource was updated on 13/09/2022.

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## Supporting your baby or child's hearing loss

- Your audiologist will discuss different options available to help you and your family.
- Hearing aids can be useful for children with any level of deafness and may be recommended for your baby/child so that they have the best chance of hearing.
- Cochlear implants are usually suitable for children with a severe to profound permanent deafness who can't hear speech sounds from their hearing aids. These are fitted during an operation.
- Your baby or child may have a range of needs of which deafness is only one. If you have other concerns about your child's health, development, or behaviour, speak to your health visitor or GP.
- Seek support from your family, or other families with deaf babies, children, and adults. Your health visitor can also put you in touch with support groups and local families.
- If your child has been diagnosed with a permanent hearing loss, you may be referred to a Teacher of the Deaf (ToD). ToD are qualified teachers who have taken further training and qualified to teach children with a hearing loss. They provide support to deaf children, their parents and family, and to other professionals who are involved with a child's education. They offer support after the diagnosis and to help your child get the support they need in nursery/ childcare and school.
- Every deaf young child and their family has different communication needs, and what works for one will not necessarily work for another. See our "Further information" section for links that will help you decide on the approach that is right for your child and ways to be 'deaf-friendly'.

### Further information:

Many families benefit from meeting other families of deaf babies and children. The [National Deaf Children's Society \(NDCS\) Facebook Page](#) is an online forum in which parents can share experiences and tips.

Many local authorities run groups for the families of deaf pre-school children; there are also local deaf children's society groups. Find your nearest group/place here: <https://bit.ly/3aChjRK>.

Families who have a baby or a child with a hearing loss are entitled to claim [Disability Living Allowance](#) to help with additional costs and extra care needs.

The NDCS is there for every deaf baby, child and their family - no matter what their level or type of deafness or how they communicate.

The NDCS has a free helpline - **0808 800 8880** - offering free, independent information and advice, and all their publications are free of charge to members. Membership is free and you can register via their [website](#).

## Top tips

### Help to develop a positive deaf identity:

- Reading or watching deaf children in stories and films can be helpful for you and your family
- Find out about successful deaf people such as celebrities, athletes, or famous artists.

### Communication and language:

- Babies are learning about language from the minute they are born
- If babies and children can't hear everything you say, they can pick up lots of communication information from your face and your body language
- Make sure your baby or child can see your face when you are talking to them
- Copy their facial expressions and sounds, and play games like a peek a boo.

### Spoken language and sign language:

- They may use simple signs or gestures to support their speech
- Point or show your baby or child what you are talking about.

### Hearing devices:

- Hearing devices help your baby or child to hear speech and learn spoken language
- If your child is using spoken language, it will be important for them to use their hearing devices as much as possible
- Your audiologist, ToD and other parents will have top tips on how to keep hearing devices on your child, or what to do if they are whistling!

### Noisy places:

Noisy places can be difficult for your baby or child to listen:

- Turn off the TV
- Close the door or windows
- Try to talk one at a time when spending time with your baby or child.

### Behaviour:

- Your child may behave in a different way. It's helpful to understand the reasons for this.
- Try to be patient and remain calm – they maybe finding it difficult to put into words what they are feeling.
- The BBC Tiny Happy People have some great resources that you might find helpful: <https://bbc.in/3dlI2Hu>

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