

recognising deafness in children



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Hearing loss in children can be treated and managed.

The signs and symptoms of hearing loss can be different for each child. Even if your child has passed previous hearing tests, they could develop problems hearing later on. In many cases, hearing loss is temporary and a treatable condition. If your child has any of the symptoms below, it's worth taking the time to get answers and the treatment your little one deserves. Don't wait. Start today.

Some signs your child could be deaf or losing their hearing:

- Saying "what?" or "huh?" more often
- Can't hear someone on the phone
- Hears and says words incorrectly
- Changes in behaviour. For example:
 - withdrawn or cranky
 - distracted and prone to daydreaming
 - problems with tiredness and being able to concentrate
 - not confident
- Can't hear if there's background noise
- Not responding when called
- Struggles at school – can't hear the teacher
- Has trouble following directions
- Complains of earache or a ringing sound in their ears (tinnitus)
- Speech delays or falling behind in speech development - says words incorrectly
- Speaks more loudly or more softly than others
- The television or music they listen to is very loud

- Watches you closely when you are talking – watching for visual cues
- Listens with one ear or says they can only hear out of their “good ear.”
- You just have a feeling. Sometimes you just can’t put your finger on what your concern is.

If you have concerns:

Have a chat with your playgroup leader or child’s teacher to see if they have similar concerns. If you have any doubt at all about your child’s hearing, have them tested. The type of tests used to diagnose hearing loss depends on the age of the child, but can include:

- objective tests which measure the electrical activity in the brain in response to a sound
- simple tests such as shaking a rattle nearby and observing the child’s response

tests with an audiometer – a machine that produces sounds such as beeps and whistles. Whether or not the child can hear certain sounds helps to pinpoint their degree of hearing loss

using Sound Scouts, an Australian-invented, online game app test for children.

Treatment depends on the cause and severity of hearing loss, but can include:

antibiotics or removal of a blockage for temporary hearing loss

hearing aids

assistance from a specialist teacher of the deaf

a cochlear implant may be considered in the case of severe or profound hearing loss

Where to get help

- Your doctor, visiting health service or nurse
- Audiologist
- Ear, nose and throat specialist

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For more information visit
flyingcolours.org.au

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