

Encouraging your child to wear hearing aids

When your child first starts wearing hearing aids, it is important that you encourage them to wear their aids regularly. The more your child wears their hearing aids, the easier it is to find out how much they are helping. You need to encourage your child to like their hearing aids. Your own attitude towards them is all-important. If you are positive, your child will be more accepting and positive about wearing them. This is especially true of older children who are wearing aids for the first time.

When the time comes to put the hearing aids in for the first time, both you and your child may feel anxious. If you are fitting hearing aids to your baby, the chances are that your baby will be fine with them unless they feel that you are nervous or upset.

Useful tips from other parents

- Hold the earmoulds in your hand for a couple of minutes before trying to put them in. This makes them warmer and less of a shock for your child. It also makes them softer, easier to put in and more comfortable. You can also try putting the hearing aids in before your baby or young child normally wakes up, so that they are already in place. Never leave babies and young children alone with hearing aids as they may put them in their mouths.
- Slowly build up the length of time that your child wears their hearing aids.
- Depending on how your child is taking to the hearing aids, you could start with just a couple of minutes several times a day. If you are feeling stressed because you have already put the hearing aids in many times that day and each time your child took them out within seconds, stop trying and have a rest. Your child will sense that you are feeling stressed and this will only make it more difficult. Try again later or the next day when you are both feeling a bit more relaxed.
- Have something ready to distract your child, such as a favourite toy. Perhaps you could even have a special toy that they have only when you are putting the hearing aids in.
- Keep the hearing aids in a special and safe place. If your child takes their hearing aids out, take your child and the hearing aids to the special place and put the aids away. They will learn to put the hearing aids in the special place when they take them out and you won't have to go looking for them every time they disappear.
- Don't force your child to wear their hearing aids. It is much better to encourage your child to like wearing them. It is better for them (and you) in the long run if they have a positive attitude towards their hearing aids.
- Try to meet other parents so they can share their experiences with you. This may also give your child the chance to see another child wearing hearing aids and so feel that they are not the only one. It may also be useful to meet adults with hearing aids so that your child can see that people of all ages wear them.
- Decorate the aids with stickers and personalise them.
- Let your child have choices. Ask them if they are going to wear the hearing aids. Perhaps offer them two of their favourite things to choose from as rewards when they wear their hearing aids.
- You decide when your child wears their hearing aids and for how long, so you put them in and take them out. This keeps the chance of your child deciding to throw them away as low as possible. It also stops it from turning into a game and drawing unnecessary attention to the situation.

- If you have a young or very active child, you can ask the hospital for hearing aid retainers. These are bands that clip around the hearing aid and the child's ear. They secure the hearing aid to the ear and stop them from flapping about.

These tips are only a starting point and you don't need to follow all of the tips all of the time. Choose the tips that you think may work for you and your child and give them a try.