

Module 2: Understanding Hearing: How the Ear Works and How to Test Hearing in Infants

Section: Hearing Tests for Infants and Young Children

Two Categories of Tests

- Objective
- Subjective

Activity 2.2: Guiding Families in Understanding Age-Appropriate Hearing Evaluations for Their Child

- A. Share *Setting Language in Motion: Family Supports and Early Intervention for Babies Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing* handout, *Testing Hearing in Infants*, from Module 2:
- Ask the parents to describe different hearing tests their child has experienced: *What equipment was used? Was the child awake or asleep? For what reaction was the audiologist looking? What was the family told about the test?* Ask the parents to name the hearing test(s) that have been used with their child.
 - Discuss tests to be used with the child in the future. Explain what is involved in a child becoming a good candidate for the next levels of testing (e.g., the ability to condition a child to turn his or her head in response to a sound, a child's motivation to turn to a visual reward in response to a sound, the ability to follow simple directions and participate in a listening game, the ability to wait for a sound). As the child nears the point of transitioning to a different type of test, discuss with the family the next test the audiologist will use.

B. Considerations for children with physical or cognitive challenges:

- Discuss with the family how these challenges may impact the type of test used for their child. For example, if a child does not have the physical ability to turn his or her head, then visual reinforcement audiometry (VRA) may not be an effective way to evaluate their child. If a child cannot manipulate objects, then conditioned play audiometry (CPA) would not be possible. If a child has visual disabilities, VRA may not be appropriate but CPA may be. If a child does not have the cognitive abilities to complete the tasks required of subjective audiology tests, then it may only be possible to complete objective tests.
- If available in your area, discuss the use of Cortical Auditory Evoked Potentials, a noninvasive tool that can provide objective information on maturation of the auditory pathways. This tool may be used for children who do not reliably respond to subjective tests and for those whose auditory brainstem response (ABR) results do not provide enough information (e.g., children who cannot be sedated for an ABR due to health reasons, children with unusual brain activity that impacts ABR results, children who have auditory neuropathy and do not yet provide reliable responses to subjective tests). Contact your local audiologists to see if this tool is available near you.

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