

Module 3: Hearing Aids: The Basics

## Section: Hearing Care and Maintenance

Hearing Aid Care and Maintenance  
Checklist for Families and Providers**Activity 3.2: Learning About What Is Involved in Caring for a Child’s Hearing Aids**

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A. Review the following considerations related to hearing aid care and maintenance:

- Store hearing aids in a moisture-free environment.
- Keep hearing aids, accessories, care kits, and any paperwork related to hearing aids together in one place.
- Keep hearing aids away from pets. Many parents have regrettable stories of “the dog ate the hearing aid.”
- Investigate hearing aid insurance.
- Train other family members and caretakers in the maintenance and care of a hearing aid.
- Put together a “travel bag” to keep in the child’s backpack for when he or she is at child care, visiting family members, etc. (. See [Hearing Aid Accessories](#) handout for items to include in the travel bag.)

B. Review and practice the steps in doing a physical check of a hearing aid:

- Make sure the family has a hearing aid care kit. Most families receive this type of kit from their audiologist or are told about what they need when they get a hearing aid. (See [Hearing Aid Accessories](#) handout for a description of items typically found in a care kit. Have the family contact their audiologist, or assist them with identifying where to purchase these items if they do not have them.)
- Review and have parents practice the steps in doing a daily physical check of the hearing aid. For example, have them check the battery, listen to the hearing aid with a hearing aid stetheset (special stethoscope designed to listen to a hearing aid), make sure the earmold does not have any cracks or wax blockages, etc.
- Have the family practice putting the hearing aid in the dry kit. Remember to show the parents the desiccant (drying substance) in the dry kit. Tell the parents that when the desiccant changes color, it indicates that it should be replaced or

refreshed. Check the instructions to see if the type of desiccant the family has can be refreshed in the microwave or oven or if it needs to be replaced.

C. Have the family view the section of the video about hearing aid batteries and share the [Hearing Aid Batteries](#) handout. Have the family practice checking their child's batteries with their battery checker. Their specific hearing aid may look different from the video and the picture on the handouts. Review with parents the following information about hearing aid batteries:

- Hearing aid batteries are often activated by air. When first inserting new batteries, take the sticker off and allow the battery to sit exposed to air for 1-5 minutes before inserting it into the hearing aid. This helps the battery last longer.
- Batteries are DANGEROUS. Be very careful about keeping them out of reach of children and pets who can swallow or inhale them.
- Batteries can be recycled. Provide parents with information on where to recycle batteries locally. If your school or program recycles, offer to recycle the batteries for the family.

- The desiccant in the dry kit can drain the hearing aid battery so it is best to remove the battery from the hearing aid and store it separately when the hearing aid is in the dry kit.
- Explain to the family that it is a good idea to check the hearing aid battery at night after it has been used all day. If the battery is checked in the morning, it may appear good after resting at night but may drain quickly during the day.
- Emphasize the importance of having spare batteries so the child will not have to go without using their hearing aid(s).

D. View the video and share the [How to Clean the Earmold](#) handout:

- Have the parents practice taking the earmold off the hearing aid, cleaning it, and drying it.
- Reinforce that earmolds need to be washed as needed to remove wax and dirt that may block sound from getting to the child's ear.
- Explain the importance of using a dry-aid kit to evaporate the moisture that may collect in the tubes that connect from the earmold to the hearing aid.

E. View the video and share the [How to Do a Hearing Aid Listening Check](#) handout:

- Demonstrate how to do a check of how a child is functioning with his or her hearing aid using the Ling 6-Sound Check. As shown in the video, this involves presenting a series of specific speech sounds—"mm," "oo," "ah," "ee," "sh," and "s"—representative of the variety of frequencies present in speech.
- For very young children, observe a child's response to these sounds (e.g., head turn, quiet to the sounds, stop sucking on pacifier).
- For older children, have the child produce a conditioned response to a sound (e.g., raise a hand, place a block into a container).
- Do this check at a consistent loudness and distance from a child to document his or her sound awareness.

- Explain to the family members that when a child demonstrates a change in sound awareness from an established baseline response, this may reflect a possible problem with the functioning of his or her hearing aid or cochlear implant or a possible change in the child's hearing levels.
- F. Show parents the *When the Hearing Aid Isn't Working Right* handout. Discuss what to do when they notice something wrong.
- G. Review hearing aid care information with each family member who may be in charge of taking care of the child's hearing aids. Make sure each adult caring for the child can put the hearing aids on the child, take them off, and turn them off. This is especially important for caregivers who may not be the primary person responsible for hearing aids (e.g., grandparents, child care providers, working parents).
- H. Special considerations:
- If all family members are deaf, work with the family to identify a person in the child's environment who may be able to assist them in doing a listening check of the hearing aid and/or cochlear implant.
  - For families with limited resources, investigate possible community groups such as the Lions Clubs or Sertoma Clubs to support purchasing items involved in the care and maintenance of the hearing aid/cochlear implant (e.g., batteries, stethosets, dry-aid kits).
  - Check with the manufacturer of the child's hearing aid to learn more about possible resources they may provide to support hearing aid care and maintenance.

**Additional Resources:**

- *Hearing Aid Listening Check* (video)
  - *Tips for Successful Hearing Aid Use*
  - *Strategies for Keeping Hearing Aids on Young Children* (Supporting Success for Children with Hearing Loss)
  - *Ling 6 Sound Daily Check Log* (Cochlear Corporation)
  - *Ling Six Sound Check* (Advanced Bionics-Tools for Schools)
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Developed with *Kimberly Leong*, *Stacy Abrams*, and *Meg Osgood*