

Paediatric audiology

Encouraging your child to wear their hearing aids

Information for patients, relatives and carers

When a child first starts wearing hearing aids, it's important they wear them regularly. This allows your child to get used to them and you and the audiologist to see how much they're helping. Here are some tips from parents on how to get children to wear their hearing aids.

Making the hearing aids comfortable and secure

- Hold the ear moulds in your hand for a couple of minutes before trying to put them in. This makes them warmer, softer, easier to put in and more comfortable
- If you notice your child removing their hearing aids after loud noises or because their ears hurt or if your baby blinks often when they are listening to sounds around them, check the settings on the aids and talk to your child's audiologist or teacher of the deaf
- Your baby's aids may whistle when you feed them or when they're lying down. This is called feedback and it happens because the microphone on the aids is close to something solid. Arranging pillows behind your baby, holding them in a different position or temporarily turning their aids down while they are feeding can help
- If you have a young or very active child, ask the hospital for hearing aid retainers. They secure the hearing aid to the ear and stop them flapping about
- Some parents choose to use headbands to help secure the hearing aids in place – you can buy these online from several popular retailers. Your audiologist can tell you the name and make of your hearing aids so these can be custom made for your child

Slowly build up the length of time your child wears their hearing aids

- If necessary, start with getting your child to wear their hearing aids for a couple of minutes several times a day, building up the time gradually. If your child keeps taking them out, try again later when you're both more relaxed. Remember to try to make it a positive experience.

Make wearing hearing aids part of a routine

- Try making the hearing aids part of your child's dressing and undressing routine. Put the hearing aids in when they get up and take them out at night.

Make the hearing aids appealing to your child

- Hearing aids and cochlear implants are available in different colours and you can also decorate them with stickers. You can customise them with your child's favourite TV/book characters. Please see the additional information below for links to further information.

Use distraction techniques when putting the hearing aids in

- Try distracting your child with their favourite toy when you're putting the aids in or put them in while your child's concentrating on something, such as the TV.

Let your child see other hearing aid users

- Try to meet other families with a deaf child so that your child sees they're 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.
- Books about children with hearing aids can be helpful. Please see the additional information section below.

Offer rewards for wearing hearing aids

- You could use a sticker chart to record every time your child wears their hearing aids and give them a special treat if they wear them for a week.
- Your audiologist or teacher of the deaf can discuss these strategies and provide further support.

Additional information and links

- National Deaf Children Society (www.ncds.org.uk):