

Could your child *develop a hearing loss?*

By *Caroline Filo* Director and Principal Clinician at All About Hearing DipAudio.HgDvPEv.MACAud.

This question often plagues the minds of parents regarding a potential hearing problem. For a child, hearing and speech are essential tools for learning, playing and developing social skills. The ability to hear is the foundation of your child's ability to learn and reach developmental milestones, so it's important to identify any problems as soon as possible.

Even if your child has no signs or symptoms of hearing loss and has no identified hearing loss, their hearing should be checked annually up until the age of 10 years. Even older if they have a history of hearing/ear problems. Many children suffering with hearing impairment can go undetected and unnoticed for months sometimes even years. A hearing test at age 4/5 years before your child starts school is most important.

Most effective treatment is achieved through early intervention. Early diagnosis and treatment will give your child the best chance for success.

There are two primary categories of hearing loss in children, congenital (present at birth) and acquired (developed hearing loss after birth). An acquired hearing loss can happen at any age and therefore an annual hearing test should be performed, even if your child passed their newborn hearing screening.

Possible causes of acquired (developed) hearing loss:

- Untreated middle-ear infections
- Fluid in the middle ear (behind the ear drum) or glue ear (otitis media with effusion)
- Ear wax or foreign objects in the ear canal
- Perforation of the ear drum
- Other infections such as: meningitis, mumps, measles or whooping cough and even bacterial/viral virus.
- Excessive noise such as: loud music or volume up too loud on their headphones or iPods etc.
- Disease, such as Otosclerosis or Meniere's disease
- Head trauma/injury



- Ototoxic medications
- Family history of hearing loss or ear problems

Some common signs/symptoms of hearing loss in children:

Does your child

- Turn up the volume of the TV?
- Respond incorrectly to questions?
- Not respond when you call him/her?
- Ask you to repeat?
- Need you within close range and facing them to hear you clearly?
- Watch others to imitate what they are doing?
- Need you to speak louder?
- Need to search right/left to find the voice/sound?
- Have articulation or speech/language delays?
- Speak differently from other children their age?
- Have a loud voice?
- Have difficulty understanding one voice when several people are talking?
- Miss quick or soft sounds?
- Have problems academically
- Learning difficulties?
- Behavioural issues?

All About Hearing is a private hearing clinic located on the Central Coast specialising in children's hearing tests.

Caroline Filo is the Director and Principal Clinician at All About Hearing and has a focus and passion for helping children and their families with their hearing assessment needs. As we are a private hearing clinic we operate on a 'fee for service' basis.

Caroline has over 15 year's experience in the Hearing Health Care Industry in the areas of hearing assessment, hearing device prescription and hearing rehabilitation. Caroline is a full member of the Australian College of Audiology, holds a competency of Hearing Rehabilitation Specialist (HRS) and is an Accredited Practitioner with the Office of Hearing Services.

Children's Hearing Services available at All About Hearing include;

Play Audiometry – a fun and engaging way to test younger children that helps hold their interest and attention using different 'listen and drop' games such as 'block in the box' to conduct pure tone air/bone conduction testing at various pitches (frequencies) and volumes (decibel) to detect middle ear or inner ear hearing loss in each ear. Can generally be performed from 2 ½ to 3 yrs of age.

Speech Recognition Testing – using colourful pictures (picture pointing) and

toys for word identification. To assess how clearly your child is understanding speech and at what volume (dB level) in each ear. Can generally be performed from 2 ½ to 3 yrs of age.

Tympanometry – Middle ear function test. Objective test that requires little co-operation from the child to perform. Automatic test that measures how well the middle ear system is functioning. Can detect a variety of middle ear problems such as; middle ear fluid, glue ear, perforation (hole in the eardrum) negative middle ear pressure/eustachian tube dysfunction. Can generally be performed from 6 months of age.

OtoAcoustic Emissions Screening – OAEDP/OAETE – Objective test similar to the newborn screening test that requires little co-operation from the child and is very quick to perform. Automatic test that screens for hearing loss above 30dB. Can generally be performed from 6 months of age.

Conventional Audiometry for older children – Pure tone air/bone conduction to access the acuity of hearing in the middle and or inner ear by requiring a specific response such as; hand raising or button pressing. More pitches (frequencies can generally be tested with this age group, depending on the individual child. Can generally be performed from 7 years of age.

Otoscope Examination and Consultation – included with each appointment.

Test Results and Reports – Copies of hearing test results and reports included for parents and for your child's GP, ENT, Speech Pathologist, Paediatrician, Australian Hearing or other Allied Health Care Practitioner (with parent/guardian written consent).

Custom made Water Protection plugs – Useful to prevent ear infections, exostosis and swimmers ear. If your child has grommets or perforated ear drum. Best water protection for swimmers, surfers, after ear surgery or for those prone to ear infections. Adults and children. Superior fit, comfort and protection than standard ear plugs.

Custom made Musicians ear plugs, Noise protection plugs, Sleeping plugs, Individual Communication Earpieces also available for adults and children.

All About Hearing is located at Healthy Self Centre Erina and also at Kincumber. We will shortly be opening in the Wyong area. Please call 0455 404 486 to arrange an appointment. For more information please visit our website www.allabouthearing.com.au.

All About Hearing

Hearing Health Care Professionals



Is your child starting school next year?

Have their hearing checked today!

HEARING TESTS FOR CHILDREN

Caroline Filo
Member of the Australian College of Audiology
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