

Developmental Milestones

These are things your baby should be doing if he or she has normal hearing. If you are concerned that your baby is not showing one or more of these behaviors, it is important to tell your baby's doctor immediately.

No later than 3 months

- Startles to loud sounds
- Quiets to your voice
- Changes sucking pattern to sounds
- Makes pleasure sounds (coos, goos)
- Cries differently for different needs

No later than 6 months

- Turns eyes toward sounds
- Notices that toys make sounds
- Starts babbling using sounds like "m," "b," "p"
- Uses voice to indicate excitement or unhappiness

No later than 12 months

- Imitates some speech sounds
- Uses different sounds to babble (nana, upuh, bibibi)
- Has one or two words which may not be clear (bye-bye, mama)
- Responds to her/his own name
- Understands common words like "cup," "shoe," and "juice"
- Turns head toward softer sounds
- Responds to music with movement



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To Learn More About Newborn Hearing Screening

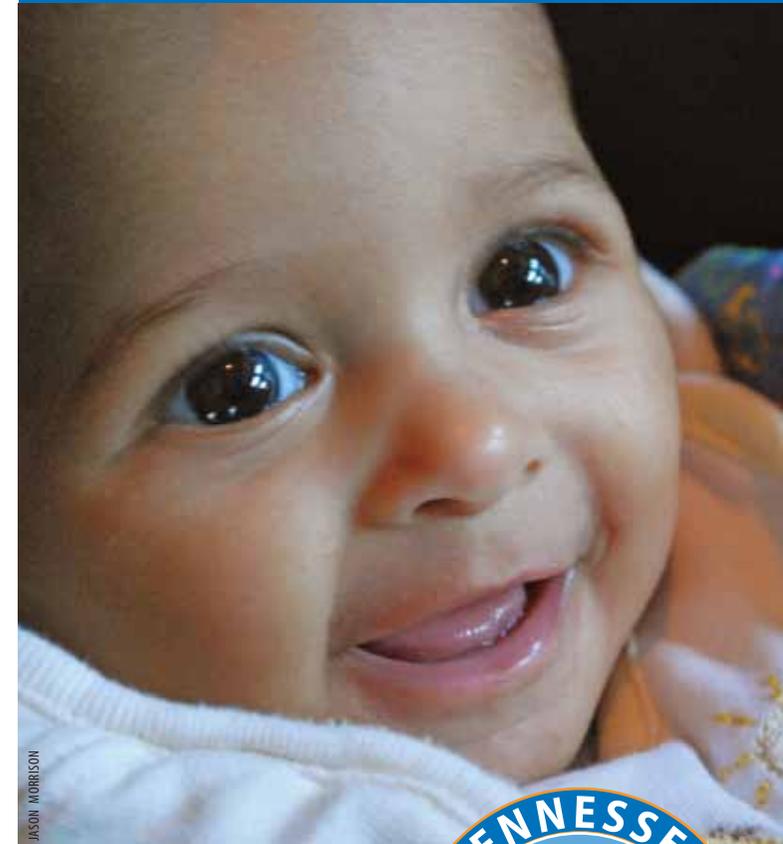
Tennessee Newborn Hearing Screening Program
State of Tennessee
Department of Health
630 Hart Lane
Nashville, Tennessee 37243
615-262-6160 or 262-6304
<http://health.state.tn.us/womenshealth>

The University of Tennessee Center on Deafness
Newborn Hearing Program
865-765-3586 or 1-866-961-2397
<http://centerondeafness.utk.edu/newborn/>

My Baby's Hearing
www.babyhearing.org

The National Center for Hearing Assessment
and Management (NCHAM)
www.infantheating.org

Newborn Hearing Screening



JASON MORRISON

THE UNIVERSITY of TENNESSEE 
KNOXVILLE
CENTER ON DEAFNESS

No child is too
young to test.



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R01-1728-028-003-11 • A project of the UT Center on Deafness with assistance from the Creative Communications Group of UT Knoxville Communications and Marketing, 865-974-0765. Revisions: 10005

Why does my baby need a hearing screen?

Permanent hearing loss occurs in approximately 2 to 3 babies per 1,000 births. Hearing loss in babies is easy to overlook because you cannot see it, and babies cannot tell us they are unable to hear. About half of the babies born with hearing loss are healthy and have no family history of hearing loss.

To make sure each baby with hearing loss is identified shortly after birth, Tennessee law requires hospitals to screen all babies before leaving the hospital.

Finding out that your baby has a hearing loss soon after birth means that he or she will not miss opportunities to learn how to use language. Research shows that children whose hearing loss is identified early have better language, social, and academic skills.

How is a hearing screen performed?

There are two kinds of hearing screening methods: Automated Auditory Brainstem Response (AABR) and Otoacoustic Emissions (OAE). Both are very safe and take only a few minutes. Most babies sleep through their hearing screen.

The AABR method uses little earphones and sticker sensors that measure your baby's brainwaves. A computer looks at the brainwaves to determine if sounds are heard normally. The OAE method uses a soft ear tip to measure faint sounds that echo from the ear. A computer determines if these sounds are normal.

Both AABR and OAE are widely accepted ways to rule out significant hearing loss. However, neither method detects mild hearing loss, and OAE screening will not identify a more rare kind of hearing loss called auditory neuropathy. Hospitals may choose which method they use for screening, and some hospitals use both.

What if my baby does not "pass" the hearing screen?

If your baby does not "pass" the hearing screen, you will need to have your baby tested again. The hospital staff should provide you with an appointment for this second test before you are discharged. It is very important to get this appointment no later than two weeks after your baby leaves the hospital.



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Can my doctor perform the hearing screen?

There are only a few doctors who have the specialized equipment that is needed to perform a hearing screen, which is why Tennessee requires hospitals to perform the test on newborns. If your baby missed the hospital hearing screen, ask your baby's doctor to schedule an appointment with a local audiologist. If your baby needs a second test, ask the hospital staff or your baby's doctor to assist you in making an appointment with an audiologist.

Will my baby ever need another hearing screen?

Some babies who pass their hearing screen at birth may develop a hearing loss later for a variety of reasons. If you ever have concerns that your child cannot hear normally or is developing speech at a slow rate, ask your baby's doctor to help you schedule another hearing screen.

“ When Claire was born, newborn hearing screening was not mandatory in the state of Tennessee. When we discovered that Claire could have easily received this simple test but did not, we were devastated. We could have known right away that Claire had a hearing loss and we could have started making decisions regarding her hearing immediately, rather than losing five very precious months—the age at which she was finally diagnosed.”

—Michelle Puryear, Nashville

This mother pushed to have “Claire’s Law” passed in Tennessee—a law that requires hearing screening for all babies before discharge from the hospital.

