How Hearing Typically Develops

Months 8 9 12 24

- Tries to copy changes in voice pitch
- Babbles ("gaga")
- Tries to copy speech sounds
- Understands simple words like "bye-bye"
- Understands simple requests like "open your mouth"
- Likes to repeat sounds
- Tries to say a few words
- Knows the names of people and common things
- Hears when you call from another room
- Points out objects or body parts when asked
- Uses several simple words
- Follows basic directions like "get the ball"
- Puts 2 words together like "my teddy"

WARNING SIGNS
Your toddler could be at risk of developing hearing problems if he has:
- fluid or a bad smell coming from his ear
- pain in the ear
- redness around the ear
- wax blockage or an object in the ear

He may already have hearing problems if he:
- talks very loudly or softly
- doesn’t respond when called
- always turns the same ear toward sounds
- has trouble understanding what you’re saying (after 36 months)
- isn’t startled by loud noises

If you have concerns, contact your health care provider or public health nurse, or call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1.

MONEY SENSE
If you get premium assistance through the Medical Services Plan (MSP) – or if, as of January 2020, you get supplemental services – your child may be eligible for the Healthy Kids program. This can help with the cost of hearing aids. See Dental Care, Vision and Hearing in the Resources chapter for more information.

Remember – all children develop at their own pace.

How Hearing Typically Develops

Keeping Hearing Healthy

Check hearing early and often
Your baby’s hearing will be checked at birth, either in hospital or at a public health office. Have your child checked again anytime you have concerns. When hearing loss is caught early, more can be done to help.

Protect his ears
- Clean only the outer ear with a clean cloth. Don’t use cotton swabs or put anything inside the ear.
- Keep music and TV volumes low.
- Have your toddler wear ear protection if he’s around a lot of noise, like loud music or fireworks. Don’t give him earplugs, which he can choke on.
- Have him immunized. (See Preventing Sickness)

Reduce ear infections
Frequent ear infections can damage hearing. You can help your toddler avoid infections by:
- breastfeeding (see Breastfeeding Your Toddler)
- not putting him to bed with a bottle
- keeping him away from second-hand smoke

Hearing plays a key role in your toddler’s speech and language development and social and emotional growth.