



M & M

Mills & McKinney  
Hearing Practice

# Getting used to hearing aids - advice for parents

## What to expect and when

Hearing aids are truly wonderful, and provide huge benefit, however they do not immediately restore normal hearing. It will take time for your child to get used to all the new sounds that they are suddenly hearing, some will be louder than they are used to, and there are likely to be sounds that are completely new to them. Do not be surprised if your child does not appear to react to sound as you think they should.

If they had a significant hearing loss before wearing hearing aids, any sound can be a new and sometimes frightening experience. It takes some time to get used to these sounds, learn what they mean, and start to make sense of them. The longer your child has been without adequate sound, the longer it is likely to take to get used to amplified sound.

Please also see our advice on [Getting Used to Your Hearing Aids](#).

## Show your child that sound has meaning

Any speech or sound source must have some meaning e.g. say "Milk" or "Chocolate" whilst holding some in your child's sight, saying the words and then giving it to them. Repeating this process helps your child to learn that the associated sound means a reward and is good! Saying their name to get their attention, and then rewarding with a cuddle, smile or game shows them that responding to sound is exciting.

However, do NOT over stimulate your child by constant name calling for no reason or clicking of fingers to elicit a response. This behaviour will only serve to teach your child to ignore sound.

## What you may observe

New and unexpected sounds can cause your child to be startled and initially afraid. Some of these sounds they will never have heard before or at least never at the loudness they now experience. This is not because the hearing aids are set too high, it is just part of the learning process and in time they will accept these.

## Sounds that commonly get a response are:

- Water running – Toilet flushing
- Washing Machine
- Fire Alarm
- Vacuum cleaner
- Emergency Vehicle siren
- Underground Train
- Road Vehicles especially lorries and buses

## How often should hearing aids be worn

In short, as much as possible. Think of all this new sound like learning a new language – the more your child practices, the better they will be at it.

However, you may find that it is easier to introduce your child to the hearing aids gradually. We advise that you start off with short periods in quiet situations. This should be gradually extended to more time and a greater variety of situations. This process should be complete when your child wears the hearing aid all waking hours in all situations.

They should not be worn in the shower when swimming or when asleep at night.

Please also see our advice on [Getting Used to Your Hearing Aids](#).

## Removing and apparent rejection of the hearing aid

When children first wear hearing aids they may feel a bit uncomfortable and appear pointless to them. This commonly results in tears, tantrums and a determination by your child to get their own way and remove the hearing aids.

Once your child observes parental panic to get the hearing aids back on, it becomes a game! This is normal behaviour. There are two important lessons for you to observe in this, and if observed correctly the rejection should stop within a few weeks. Firstly, if your child removes the aid, just ignore it for a few minutes and then when they are distracted put it in again. Secondly never bribe your child otherwise you are rewarding taking the hearing aids out.

## Will hearing aids give my child the same hearing as me?

This depends on the degree of your child's hearing loss. However, as a general rule they will not have completely normal hearing with hearing aids in even though they will have access to far more sound and hear generally better.

You can expect your child to have some residual hearing difficulties even when wearing their hearing aids. In particular:

- Hearing in noisy or reverberant environments including classrooms
- Hearing if you are speaking to them from a distance, or when turned away from them
- Sometimes they will have difficulty telling the direction of sound

Please see the section on Communication Strategies and Tips below and refer to our resources on how to talk to people with hearing loss and auditory training for more information.

Please also see our advice on [Getting Used to Your Hearing Aids](#).

## Communication strategies and tips

Firstly, it is important to remember these tips when speaking to your child and to communicate these to all other family members or teachers and professionals talking to your child.

- Speak clearly and naturally, and just a little slower than normal. It is not necessary to shout – this will only cause distortion and discomfort
- Do not stand or sit more than one meter away if possible – distance will reduce the integrity of the speech signal unless you are using a separate wireless microphone
- Always face your child, so that they can see your face and lips – visual clues are important in speech understanding and especially so if your child has a hearing loss

Secondly it is important to teach your child the value and benefit of hearing sound and speech. We suggest that you start with a selection of noise making toys, picture books or similar age-appropriate products. We do NOT recommend using the TV as a source of speech and visual cues. It is important that whatever you choose it remains interactive and not passive. Ask for more information if you want.

Please also see our advice on [Auditory Training Exercises](#) if your child is older, [Getting Used to hearing aids](#), [Helping others to hear better](#), and [Listening Tips](#).

## Speech and language

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## Additional handicaps

There are a number of additional problems which may slow the learning process and the acquisition of speech down still further. These need to be taken into account when selecting noise making toys and picture books and when setting expectations from hearing aids. These are:

- Physical disabilities
- Partial or no sight
- Slow learning / developmental delay
- Speech and Language delay

## Caring for your hearing aids

After investing in your child's hearing aids, you will no doubt want to keep them performing to their optimum level and for as long as possible. A regular cleaning routine will help to keep your aids functioning exactly as they should.

It is essential that you have a daily cleaning routine and replace wax filters and domes every four to six weeks. You also need to keep the aids clean and dry.

If you do not do this, the receiver (the component which provides sound into your ear) may become blocked with wax and will gradually become weaker, affecting performance. If not cleaned regularly, it will eventually stop working altogether, requiring repair or even replacement.

Wax blockage is regarded by manufacturers as your responsibility, so they are within their rights to reject any warranty claim for damage caused by wax blockage – so even more reason to prevent it.

At any time, if you have difficulty in changing domes or filters or need to go over the cleaning regime again, contact us and ask for help – we would prefer you to do this rather than have the aids block with wax and not perform as they should do.

We also provide a range of drying boxes, which both sanitise and dry your hearing aids.

Cleaning routines and equipment vary according to the make and model of your hearing aid.

You will find further information and “how to” videos in the “Looking After your Hearing Aids” in the Hearing Aids section of our Services.

Please contact us if you need any further advice.

### **Further information**

Please see our managing tinnitus, changing negative thinking, relaxation techniques and tinnitus FAQ resources. You will find further information Tinnitus management in our services section. You will also find a blog about tinnitus in our Blog section.

The British Tinnitus Association also has some useful information. You can find this at <https://www.tinnitus.org.uk>

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