

## Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program

### Frequently Asked Questions – Home Births/Birth Centers

#### **What is newborn hearing screening and why is newborn hearing screening important?**

Newborn Hearing Screening is a quick procedure that checks a baby's hearing and identifies those babies who need further testing. Babies use their hearing to learn to talk, so it's important to identify hearing loss early. It is helpful to know how a baby hears as soon as possible.

#### **When should newborn hearing screenings be performed?**

Babies should be screened before they are 1 month old.

#### **Is newborn hearing screening required?**

There is no state law requiring newborn hearing screening. However, a national recommendation by the Joint Committee on Hearing Screening is that all babies be screened before they are 1 month old. Parents may refuse newborn hearing screening.

#### **Where can I get hearing screening for my baby?**

Currently, hearing screening is available at all NH birth hospitals with birth units and all NH freestanding birth centers. Contact the NH Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program at 1-800-852-3345, ext. 1037 (in-state) or direct at 603-271-1037 for the location of the birth center nearest to you.

#### **How is newborn hearing screening done?**

Newborn Hearing Screening is painless and takes about 15 minutes. It should be done while a baby is asleep in a quiet environment. A computer-based screener is used to record each ear's response to sound. It automatically gives a pass or refer result and does not require the baby to respond. Typically, for home births, hearing screening is done by OtoAcoustic Emissions (OAE). Soft sounds are presented through soft foam ear buds.

#### **How and when will I get hearing screening results?**

All newborn hearing screening results are available from the provider that does the newborn hearing screening. You should ask your provider about your baby's hearing screening results. If your baby does not pass the newborn hearing screening, your baby will be referred to a diagnostic center for follow up.

#### **What do the newborn hearing screening results mean?**

**Pass** means that your baby has adequate hearing at the time of the screening. Some babies who pass the screening may require further testing due to family history or medical conditions.

**Refer** means that your baby did not pass the screening. If your baby did not pass the first screening, a second one will be done. If your baby does not pass, or "refers", on the final hearing screening, your baby should have diagnostic hearing testing with an audiologist. The audiologist will be able to determine if there is a hearing loss.

#### **What if I have concerns about my child's hearing later on?**

Since hearing loss can occur at any age, hearing testing should be done any time there is a concern about a child's hearing. You should speak to your child's health provider about your concerns.

**What if I have additional questions?**

If you have additional questions, please contact the NH Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program at 1-800-852-3345 ext. 1037 (in state only) or 603 271-1037.  
Relay New Hampshire TTY: 711

**Additional Resources:**

- My Baby's Hearing: <http://www.babyhearing.org/>
- Beginnings for Parents: <http://www.ncbegin.org/>
- Hands and Voices (video): <http://www.handsandvoices.org/>
- NH Early Hearing Detection & Intervention Program: <http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/bchs/mch/hearing.htm>
- Center for Disease Control: Hearing Loss in Children: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/hearingloss/index.html>