

Help Parents Understand **Early Detection** and **Intervention**

As a new parent's primary medical contact, you answer parents' questions about many health issues – including newborn screenings. Fewer than half of new and expectant mothers know that most babies receive hearing screenings at birth, giving you an opportunity to provide critical guidance. By counseling all parents **before they leave the hospital** about the importance of hearing screenings and the proper follow-up care, you can help ensure that parents – even those whose babies passed the screening – have the information they need to make decisions that will give their children a sound start on life.

 **Ensure that babies are screened for hearing loss** before they leave the hospital or birthing center using an auditory brainstem response (ABR) or otoacoustic emissions (OAE) test. (National guidelines call for all infants to be screened before they are 1 month old.)

 **Make sure parents understand what the screening results mean.** Most parents whose children are diagnosed with hearing loss are neither prepared for it, nor aware of the options for addressing it. Likewise, parents whose babies "pass" the newborn hearing screening often are unaware that their child may be at risk of developing hearing loss later on. Explaining the meaning of a positive or negative hearing screening result will help parents understand the importance of follow-up care and ongoing monitoring.

 **Direct parents to schedule a follow-up evaluation right away** with an audiologist if their baby "fails" the newborn hearing screening. Explain to parents that babies with hearing loss can begin to develop listening and language skills with the help of a hearing aid before they are 3 months old. Provide parents with information for several audiologists in the area and, if possible, work with their Baby's doctor to help them make the appointment.

 **Stress the importance of ongoing monitoring** to parents whose child "passed" the newborn hearing screening. Inform parents that hearing loss is an invisible condition that can develop after birth in up to 30 percent of children. Make sure parents know the signs of hearing loss so they can watch for them.

 **Provide parents with appropriate hearing loss resources.** Distribute relevant materials, such as the hearing checklists for parents. Direct parents to the Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing at www.agbell.org or 202-337-5220 or refer them to the reverse side of this card for more resources to help them.

Provide Parents with **Appropriate Hearing Loss Resources**

Distribute hearing health checklists and direct parents to the following organizations:



**ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL ASSOCIATION
FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING**
Phone: 202-337-5220 | Web: www.agbell.org

(Room for additional listings)

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