

How can I help my child adjust to wearing hearing aids?

- Be patient and give your child time to get used to the hearing aid and the sound it produces.
- Start in quiet surroundings and gradually build up to noisier environments.
 - Remove equipment when transitioning from one location to another
 - Experiment where and when the hearing aid works best for your child.
- **Prepare:** Provide your child ample notice when entering a new environment where he/she is expected to wear his/her hearing aids. Use a social story or some form of a visual to help them prepare for the noise level – this will help with reducing anxiety. Be clear about expectations and tell what to do, instead of what not to do.
- **Practice:** A child that is engaged with music, conversation, or a communication activity is more likely to forget about their hearing aids and to begin to internalize the benefits of wearing hearing aids.
 - Try it out! Equipment introduction should be done during a child’s preferred activity
 - Track the times you practiced and the outcome
 - Determine how you will remind them when practice will occur
 - Introduce them to a visual schedule
 - Use a calendar
- **Provide lots of specific praise** for when your child puts on the hearing aids. Use stickers, high fives, and specific language to praise efforts. For example, *“I really like that you are keeping your hearing aids on – great job!”*
 - Ignore when equipment is pulled out
 - Attention can be a *very* strong motivator. Remember this during times when you are practicing with the equipment.
 - Give attention for appropriate behaviors
- **Create Goals:** As with adults adjusting to wearing hearing aids can be difficult. Children need to work up to having them on for longer periods of time and work up to the steps necessary to be more independent with them. If a child is just starting out using hearing aids don't expect them to be able to wear them all day. Help them get used to the aids by letting them wear them for longer and longer periods. And have them use their hearing aids in situations with less background noise. Restaurants can be a difficult listening environment. Help children keep track of hearing aid achievements and goals in regards to self-advocacy and independence.
 - Create a customized visual chart that helps your child track how long they wear their hearing aids. Incorporating a reward at the end of the day can be motivating as well.
 - Think about when the motivator would need to occur and determine what type of motivator would work best for them.
 - During the time they are wearing the equipment
 - After the time for wearing the equipment

- Determine how you will indicate that the time is up for wearing the equipment (*timer, end of a show, end of an activity*)
 - **TIP:** if they are not experiencing distress and are not fighting wearing equipment, you can introduce an extension of time by saying, “Your hearing aids are great! Would you like to wear them for 5 more minutes or 10 more minutes?”) Praise for success and allow for continuation. If you notice even a small amount of distress, end on a good note and then remind the child when the next practice session will be.
- Be clear that only a caregiver or adult can remove the equipment.
- Be consistent.
 - All caregivers should be on the same page and following the same rules/ goals.
- Teach acceptance.
 - Have equipment for your child’s favorite dolls, stuffed animals, or toys.
 - “Everybody counts!” Show peers how equipment works.
- Keep a record of any questions and concerns you have and bring those to your child's follow-up examination.

Hearing Aid – Accessories



Ear Gear & Oto/Critter Clips: Spandex sleeve slips over hearing device. Has stretch cord and plastic locking clip. Stretchy cord, allows for full range of head motion. Spandex sleeve protects from mess/damage and from hearing aids being swallowed by infants. Plastic clip to clothing has no sharp edges.



Plastic loop slips over hearing device. Has poly cotton cord and metal alligator clip. Flexible cotton cord comes in many different colors to increase child’s interest and pride in wearing hearing aids. Option with barrette can be effective to discourage young child yanking out the hearing aid, while not causing discomfort when removed by parent.



Wig/Toupee Tape - specifically made for use on skin. Attaches to both hearing device and skin. Must replace tape on a regular basis to maintain security. Good short-term strategy. Tape does not require much of a ‘tug’ to remove hearing aid, but is helpful in preventing dislodging when child is just starting to use his/her hands to explore or when the device is large/heavy for the child’s ear. Used primarily when child is young or very active. Use on all hearing devices.