What is a Diagnostic Hearing Evaluation?

A diagnostic hearing evaluation is another step in checking your baby's hearing. The evaluation includes a number of tests to get a complete picture of your baby's hearing. The evaluation will be completed by an audiologist, a health care professional who specializes in hearing.

How is the Diagnostic Hearing Evaluation Done?

While your baby is resting or sleeping, special equipment is used to play soft sounds through earphones specially made for testing babies' hearing. The whole process is painless. Your baby's responses to the sounds are electronically recorded either through the ear pieces or through little wires attached by sticky pads on the head. Because more tests are done, a diagnostic hearing evaluation takes more time than newborn hearing screening. It is possible that you may be at the office for an hour or more and may need to return for a second visit.

Your Baby's Diagnostic Evaluation Appointment:

Baby's name:

_____

Appointment Date & Time:

_____

Appointment Location:

_____

Appointment Contact Number:

_____

(Please call if you need to re-schedule your appointment.)

The California Newborn Hearing Screening Program:

The goal of California's Newborn Hearing Screening Program is to identify babies with hearing loss and link them with services by six months of age. The program has Hearing Coordination Centers that work with families, health care providers and hospitals to make sure children get needed services.

The Newborn Hearing Screening Program collects information about your baby's hearing screenings as per Section 124119 of the Health and Safety Code. The Hearing Coordination Centers may use this information to assist you and your baby in getting to services you may need. It is possible that the Hearing Coordination Center may contact you about follow-up services.

Newborn Hearing Screening Program
Toll Free 1-877-388-5301

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Diagnostic Hearing Evaluation Referral

California Newborn Hearing Screening PROGRAM

State of California, Department of Health Services,
Children's Medical Services

Why Does My Baby Need a Diagnostic Hearing Evaluation?

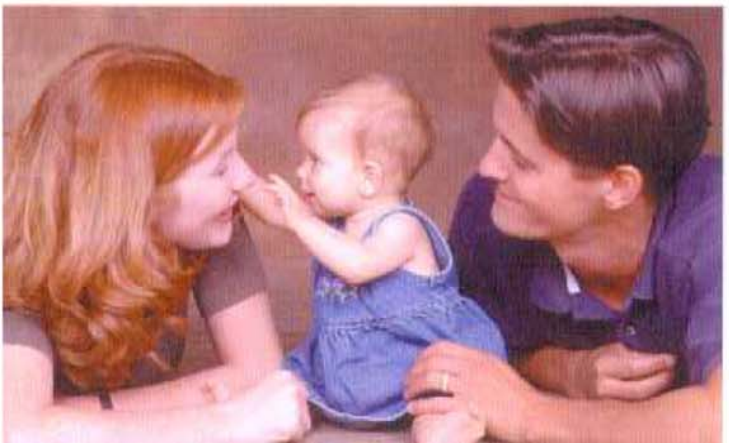
Your baby did not pass the hearing screen. There are many things that can interfere with a hearing screening, for example, noise in the room or an active baby. It is important to have a more complete hearing test as soon as possible to determine how your baby hears.

How Many Babies Have Hearing Loss?

Most babies are born with normal hearing. However, serious hearing loss is found in about 2-4 out of 1000 newborns. About 50% of the babies who have a hearing loss have no signs or risk factors, like serious illness or family history of deafness. There are many conditions that may occur before birth, during infancy or in childhood that may affect a child's hearing. Hearing loss later in childhood may be the result of repeated ear infections, meningitis, head injury, or other medical conditions. Life-saving medicines can also cause hearing loss. Sometimes the reason for a baby's hearing loss is unknown. Talk to your baby's doctor if you have any questions or concerns.

Why Test a Baby?

Detection of hearing loss should occur as early in life as possible. The first months of a child's life are very important for developing communication skills. A baby who has a hearing loss or deafness may have difficulty developing language skills or may not do well in school. The sooner a baby's hearing loss is identified, the sooner help can be provided.



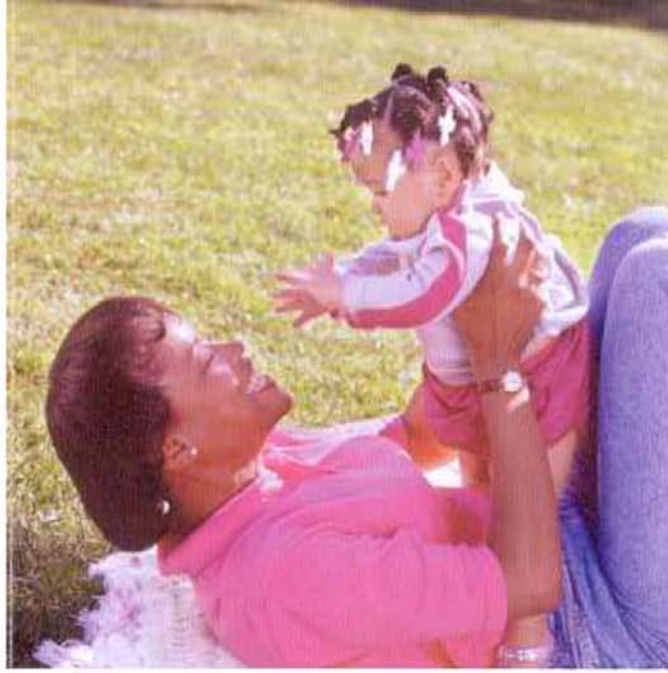
What You Can Do to Prepare for Baby's Diagnostic Hearing Evaluation

Your baby needs to sleep comfortably during most of the diagnostic hearing evaluation. These suggestions may help you prepare your baby to rest comfortably:

1. Try not to let your baby nap before the appointment.
2. Feeding your baby just before testing may help to get him/her to sleep.
3. Bring a blanket, extra diapers, change of clothes, and extra formula, if used.
4. You can try to schedule your baby's appointment for a time when your baby is likely to sleep.

What Will Happen After the Evaluation?

You will be informed of the results of the evaluation and receive a report. A report will also be sent to your baby's health care provider. If a hearing loss is detected, you will be referred to special programs and community resources. The California Newborn Hearing Screening Program's Hearing Coordination Center may contact you to assist you and your baby to get the services you need.



Who Pays for Diagnostic Hearing Evaluations?

The cost of diagnostic hearing evaluations is covered by many health insurance plans. Medi-Cal and California Children Services (CCS) will pay for the evaluation for eligible babies. If you have any questions about paying for this evaluation, talk to your baby's doctor or health care provider or call 1-877-388-5301.

Watching Baby's Development

If the diagnostic evaluation shows that your baby does not have hearing loss, you should still have your baby's hearing checked as your baby grows. Newborn hearing testing is only the first step in watching your baby's hearing, speech, and language progress. Some babies develop hearing loss later in life, therefore it is always important to pay attention to how your baby's language and speech develop.