# Practical Tips to Help Your Baby Adjust to Wearing Hearing Aids

## My child's hearing aids flop around. What can I do to prevent this?

One of the biggest problems parents often face is how to keep the hearing aid securely fitted to their child's ear. It is important to understand that no one solution will work for all children and it is often necessary for parents to explore a variety of options.

### Tone hooks

Many manufacturers can provide a pediatric tone hook to improve the fit.



### Toupee Tape

In some cases, it is helpful to use double-sided tape to secure the hearing aid to the skin behind the child's ear. This tape will need to be changed frequently. Some children may be allergic to or irritated by the adhesive.

### Eyeglass Band

Sometimes it helps to secure the two hearings to each other with an elastic band that can help hold the hearing aids close to the ear.

### Huggie Aids™

This device helps hold the hearing aid in place without adhesives, but does create more bulk around an infant's ear.



## My child pulls the hearing aid out of their ear all of the time. What can I do?

Infants spend a majority of their waking hours exploring their environment and that environment includes their ears and hearing aids. It is important to first rule out that there are not other causes for your child's behavior, such as a poorly fitting earmold or hearing aid settings that are either too loud or not loud enough. Your pediatric audiologist can help determine if rejection is due to physical discomfort or hearing aid concerns.

Some parents find it useful to have their child wear a cap or headband to minimize the likelihood of removal by their child. It is important to ensure that these devices do not affect the response of the hearing aid microphone.

## I am constantly afraid that my child will lose her hearing aid at daycare, or when we are in public (at the store or park). How can we prevent this?

Hearing aids are very expensive and parents often worry about losing such small devices. The following information should be helpful:

### Loss and Damage Warranty

Some manufacturers offer a renewable loss and damage warranty when hearing aids are purchased. If the manufacturer of your child's hearing aids does not offer this option, there are companies that do provide hearing aid insurance. It is important to read the details of these policies thoroughly. Some homeowner policies will also cover loss of hearing aids - ask your insurance agent.

### Hearing Aid Clips

These colorful clips can be used to secure the hearing aid to the child's clothing.



### Dental Floss and Fishing Line

While not as attractive as the above option, dental floss or fishing line and a safety pin can provide the same security. It is important to make sure that the length of the string is kept short.

## My child's hearing aid whistles all of the time. The only thing that prevents it is for me to turn the volume down below the recommended setting. What causes this and what should I do?

Whistling or feedback is caused when sound leaks out of the ear and travels back into the hearing aid microphone. Turning down the volume of the hearing aid is not a good long-term solution, because important speech sounds will be less audible. The following options can be tried:

### New Earmold

Unfortunately, frequent earmold replacement is often necessary for infants and young children because of rapid ear canal growth. This can be costly, but it is not uncommon for young children to need new earmolds as often as every 2 months in the first year of life and 2-3 times per year until they are preschool age. Earmolds made of a soft material provide a better seal and are safer for children than hard molds. Special pads called Comply™ Wraps may be used temporarily on the earmold to reduce feedback until a new mold can be made.

### Foam Earmolds

One manufacturer, Hearing Components, provides a soft temporary earmold that can help prevent feedback. These are currently designed for adults and may be too big for many young children. However, they may provide a solution for some older children. http://www.hearingcomponents.com

### Remote Microphone

In special cases where feedback is very difficult to control, a remote microphone can be used if the hearing aid has a Direct Audio Input (DAI) option. Feedback can be reduced this way because the distance between the hearing aid microphone and hearing aid receiver (speaker) can be increased. The microphone can be clipped to the child's hair or attached to a hat or bonnet.

## Compliance Issues

Establishing hearing aid use can be a challenge for families, but it pays to be persistent. Some young children accept hearing aids easily while other may show resistance to wearing them. Just as some children refuse to wear a hat, gloves or shoes, they may not like having something in their ears. In some cases, a young infant may accept hearing aids at first, but reject them as she becomes older and more active. If your child begins to pull his hearing aids out repeatedly, one approach is to use the hearing aids during times when there is direct contact and communication between you and your child or during intervention times with the parent-infant specialist. This may be for short periods initially, but wearing times can be expanded over time. Both parent and child benefit when hearing aid use is part of the daily routine. Some parents have found that the use of caps, as mentioned above, allows for longer and more consistent wearing times. Eventually the cap will not be necessary as children learn to leave the hearing aids in place.

As some toddlers become more independent, hearing aid use can become a power struggle between parent and toddler. It is important for you as the parent to establish yourself as the authority about hearing aid use. Even if your toddler is pulling the hearing aid out regularly, you can put the hearing aid back in again and set a time limit for wearing it before Mommy or Daddy takes it out. This can be a difficult challenge for some families. Your parent-infant specialist can provide helpful suggestions for handling this issue with your child, so do not be afraid to share your concerns.



Older toddlers and preschoolers also may have color preferences for their earmolds and hearing aids. Engaging your child in selecting his or her preferred colors for both earmolds and hearing aids can improve their acceptance of wearing the devices and give them a sense of ownership. Many different earmold color combinations and patterns are now available from all earmold manufacturers. Children often try many different combinations of earmold colors over time: from solids to polka dots and from black to neon yellow! Colored hearing aid cases are available in a range of basic colors, and some manufacturers also make colorful stickers that can be used to decorate hearing aid cases.

Several hearing aid manufactures have special books and kits for children. Information about hearing loss is presented at a child's level, which can help your child understand their hearing loss better. Child-friendly coloring books about hearing aids as well as care and maintenance kits for children can promote a sense of ownership and independence.

The following hearing aid manufactures have books and accessories geared for children:

- Oticon for Children
- Phonak Children's Products

babyhearing.org — Supported by the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders. Boys Town National Research Hospital.