



Information for Teachers on OAE Hearing Screening

It is important that everyone involved understand the basics of hearing screening and how to make it a good experience for children.

The hearing screening procedure

The hearing screening procedure measures Otoacoustic Emissions, or OAEs. OAE screening is a very reliable method to screen for a wide range of hearing health needs, including middle ear problems and permanent hearing loss. Hearing problems that are not identified and addressed can have a significant negative impact on the development of the child, especially in the language, cognitive, and social-emotional domains.

Most children pass the first OAE hearing screening but some do not. Those that don't pass will be re-screened in about two weeks. If the child doesn't pass the second hearing screening, the child will be referred for further testing by a health care provider and/or audiologist. Please remember that this is only a screening that indicates whether further testing may be needed; it does not diagnose hearing disorders or hearing loss.

What you need to know about OAE hearing screening

- A soft click or musical tone is presented to each ear by placing a tiny sound transmitter/microphone (called a *probe*) into the child's ear canal
- The child does not need to make a behavioral response to the sound
- The screening is painless and goes more quickly when the child is sitting quietly
- Screening can even be done when the child is sleeping
- A quiet environment is helpful, but silence is not required
- It usually takes about 3-5 minutes to screen each child's hearing

What you can do to help with hearing screening

- Watch the [2-minute video describing OAE screening](#).
- There are several activities to prepare the children for screening
 1. [Play the short "Listen Up" video](#) and have the children sing along. Place a "Listen Up" poster in the classroom or screening area.
 2. Play a game in which the children pretend to listen to the sound of a bird or other animal coming from a small toy or even the teacher's hand. The game should not involve placing anything in the child's ear canal.
- Tell the children they will be "playing a listening game." Never say, "You are going to have your hearing tested" or "It doesn't hurt."
- Help the screeners select a quiet location in the classroom where they will be able to have their screening materials and sufficient room to conduct the screenings.

- Coordinate with the screeners in advance about sanitation/universal precautions for your classrooms and the use of age-appropriate rewards, such as stickers.
- Continue with the usual classroom routine during the screening, although keeping activities and voices quieter will be helpful to the screening process.
- Recommend an especially cooperative child as the first to be screened so that appropriate behavior during screening can be modeled. Likewise, notify the screener(s) about children who may be resistant to the screening and possible approaches to gain cooperation.
- If you are helping the screener, you may want to hold the child on your lap or distract the child with quiet toys, such as light globes or puppets. Occupying or re-directing the children's hands away from the probe in the ear canal can be especially helpful. Be prepared to soothe children who may become distressed during the screening.