

## The Audiologist's Guide for Children with Hearing Loss

When a child has been identified with a hearing loss, the parents may have many questions and there will be decisions they will need to make. You are one of the people to whom they will turn for help. This Guide will assist you in providing the best possible services to the family following the diagnosis of hearing loss. Together the Guides for Families, Audiologists, Early Intervention Providers and Physicians comprise a shared plan of care to help parents navigate the first part of their journey with their child with hearing loss.

### Next Steps after Diagnosis

With the family present, have you:

- Repeated a diagnostic audiologic evaluation if needed?
- Discussed the hearing loss with the family in terms that they are able to understand?
- Given the family written information about hearing loss and communication options?
  - <http://communicatewithyourchild.org/> has a brochure you can print if you do not have one for the family
- Discussed possible treatment and communication options for this child's type and degree of hearing loss?
- Provided an environment of support, patience and understanding to allow the family to accept their child's diagnosis and feel empowered to make the necessary decisions?
  - The following article acknowledges and validates the audiologist's complex role in delivering results to families.  
[https://journals.lww.com/thehearingjournal/Fulltext/2017/09000/Preparing\\_for\\_Relational\\_Audiology\\_Things\\_I\\_Wish.7.aspx](https://journals.lww.com/thehearingjournal/Fulltext/2017/09000/Preparing_for_Relational_Audiology_Things_I_Wish.7.aspx)
- Discussed a referral to an Otolaryngologist – needed for hearing aid clearance; may refer for imaging of the temporal bones and auditory nerve. (Abnormal findings are noted in about 30% of patients and somewhat more in patients with asymmetric hearing loss).
- Discussed potential referrals that a pediatrician/ENT may recommend?
  - *Infectious disease specialist if CMV may be the cause*
  - *Ophthalmologist* (about 22% of children with sensorineural hearing loss have ophthalmic problems; the rate in deaf children is about 50%. Children with non-syndromic sensorineural hearing loss have a 2- to 3-fold increased occurrence of ocular abnormalities.)
  - *Geneticist* – to help identify an explanation for the hearing loss. Benefits for family members include – becoming aware of the risks of other family members having a hearing loss; knowing the risks for transmitting the auditory situation; and the satisfaction of curiosity about the etiology of the hearing loss having been addressed.
  - *Developmental pediatrics, neurology, cardiology, and nephrology as needed.*

- Discussed the benefit of Early Intervention? Language develops from birth to approximately 3 years of age when brain neuroplasticity is the greatest (Sharma et al., 2002). The early interventionist is given the task of helping a child who is deaf or hard of hearing acquire language skills during these first 3 years of life in spite of any difficulties that may be introduced by the hearing loss. The early intervention program in VA is known as the Infant Toddler Connection of VA. The family can call 800-234-1448 or go to [www.infantva.org](http://www.infantva.org) to enroll. Tell them that their local early intervention program may call them about enrolling.
- Discussed insurance issues with the family? Most families did not plan on the expenses that accompany having a child with hearing loss. They may need to call their insurance company and ask many questions. You may be able to help them think through the questions that they need to ask.
  - A Care Coordinator from the local Care Connection for Children may be able to assist them with the financial issues, especially if the child is or may be eligible for Medicaid.  
[http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/61/2016/12/Map\\_CCC.pdf](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/61/2016/12/Map_CCC.pdf)
- Discussed the helpfulness of talking with other families whose children are deaf or hard of hearing?
  - Family-to-Family Support for Families – 1-3-6 Family Educator  
<https://bit.ly/2GM0cOG>  
877-567-1122
  - Virginia Hands and Voices of Virginia [vahandsandvoices@gmail.com](mailto:vahandsandvoices@gmail.com)

Have you:

- Entered test results into VISITS if you tested the child (or if the previous audiologist did not enter the results)? This automatically triggers the referral to Early Intervention.  
<https://vr-fhs.vdh.virginia.gov/vitalpub/home>
- Initiated a trial period with amplification and/or assistive listening devices and/or cochlear implant evaluation or referred the infant to a pediatric audiologist who can fit the appropriate technology? [www.ehdipals.org](http://www.ehdipals.org)
- Sent a copy of the child’s audiological report to their Primary Care Provider?
- Worked with the family on an application to the Virginia Hearing Aid Loan Bank if the parents want to try amplification or need time to find assistance to pay for amplification?
  - 866-596-9367 or
  - <http://bit.ly/2NrhuXy>

### **For more information**

*Virginia’s Resource Guide for Families of Children with Hearing Loss*

<http://wp.vcu.edu/vcucfi/wp-content/uploads/sites/1763/2012/08/Virginia-Resource-Guide-for-Families-of-Children-who-are-Deaf-Hard-of-Hearing-2016.pdf>