

Hearing Screening Myths

Misconception	Clinical Fact
Parents can tell if their child has a hearing loss by the time their child is 2-3 months old.	Before newborn hearing screening, most children were not found to have a hearing loss until 2 or 3 years of age. In some cases, hearing loss was not discovered until children were four or five years of age and sometimes even older.
Parents can test a child's hearing loss by clapping their hands or banging pots behind their heads or by listening to their babble.	Many babies with hearing loss will startle to loud noises or respond to some sounds, and still babble like normally hearing babies. However, they will not be able to hear all the sounds important for speech. Full hearing testing is needed to find all types and levels of hearing loss that can affect speech and language development.
Using hearing loss risk factors will identify most babies with a hearing loss.	Over 50% of babies born with hearing loss have no known risk factors. 94% have two hearing parents.
Hearing loss is rare, so newborn hearing screening is not necessary.	Hearing loss affects up to 3 per 1,000 births and is considered to be the most common congenital finding.
There is no rush to identify hearing loss. After all, it isn't really important until they are in school.	Children identified with hearing loss after six months of age are more likely to have communication delays. Children identified before this time can avoid or minimize these delays through evidence-based early intervention.
Children younger than 12 months cannot be treated for hearing loss, so it is better for babies to be just babies.	Babies as young as 1 month of age can be fitted and benefit from hearing aids. Parents who decide to use visual communication methods can start using sign language and speech-reading immediately with their babies.
The doctor thinks it might be fluid, so why rush to test, as they'll have to wait anyway?	Fluid should never be used as an excuse to not test a child's hearing. Underlying sensory hearing loss can and should be ruled out as soon as possible (through the use of bone conduction testing).
Parents don't feel comfortable sedating my baby for an Auditory Brainstem Response (ABR) test, which is required to diagnose hearing loss.	Babies younger than 3 months of age can typically be tested without the need for sedation. It is easier to do earlier!

**Adapted from Anne M. De Michele, Ph.D.*



Michigan Early Hearing Detection
and Intervention Program