

# Making a Start

## Notes for parents of newly diagnosed children

### Nothing has changed!

A funny thing to say first, but one of the most important for you and your child. Whatever has been said about your child's hearing, they are still the same child that they were before being tested.

They need you to be the same too - and that goes for the rest of the family. If you all start looking at them with long faces or let them break the rules you will worry them and they won't feel safe any more. So, treat them the same as you did before and wait until they have gone to bed before you talk things over with your family.

### What can they hear?

It is very tempting to go home and try to "get them to respond" better than you saw them do at their test **but** a weekend of Mum calling their name for no reason, Dad knocking on the door and Granny banging pan lids behind them doesn't do any child much good. It will also make testing harder next time by making them less interested in sounds.

However, you can watch for sounds that interest them and make them happen again. Show them what has made the sound. The more interested they become in sounds, the better they will use their hearing.

### Talking and learning

You and the family play the most important part in your child's life, and because of this they will learn more from you than anyone else. Your job is to give them the best possible chance to learn from you.

If one or two hearing aids have been prescribed you will receive help and advice from the visiting teacher as to how to manage them and ensure that your child makes the best use of them all the time.

To learn to talk and communicate, they need to see and hear you talk and communicate with them. You are the one who will tell them about their toys and their food, about what is happening in the home, the street or the park.

You won't need to buy special "educational" toys but you will need to spend **time** rather than money. The washing up will take a little longer if you stand them on a chair to "help" and talk to /communicate with them about what you are doing.

If you are naturally a quiet sort of person you may find talking and communicating is rather an effort at first, but it gets easier. If you have other children you will see that it is good for their language too.

## You won't be alone

The Hearing Impairment Team can offer you help from a visiting Qualified Teacher of the Deaf. The teacher can work with you to help your child's language and learning. No impossible demands will be made of you. The most important thing is for you and your child to enjoy being together, as you did before.



Most deaf children learn to talk, using hearing aids, and many families also use sign language to help their child to communicate. You can talk with your visiting Teacher of the Deaf about communication choices. If you want to learn sign language, the Hearing Impairment Team has a Deaf Instructor who can teach you at home.

## Contact the Hearing Impairment Team

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