

# The Good Hearing Book

Keeping your child hearing and learning well when they have ear infections.



 **Australian  
Hearing**



Aboriginal and  
Torres Strait Islander  
Services

Children need good hearing so they learn to speak and understand their language, learn to listen, and learn their stories.

Later, they'll need these skills for school.



Glue ear, runny ear and otitis media are all ear infections.

Babies can get ear infections soon after they are born.

They are caused by germs spreading from one person to another. The germs live

in noses, throats and mucous. Hand and face washing stops the germs spreading.

Ears are often not sore, so families might not know until someone looks in their ears.

Ear troubles cause hearing loss, so it's really important to find ear troubles early.

**Get in early**  
Don't let poor hearing stand in their way.

Ask for an ear check every visit to the health centre so that ear troubles are found early.

## Learning to talk and listen

Babies learn to talk by hearing family talk.

Hearing loss makes both learning to talk and learning to listen hard.

When it's hard to listen, children can stop listening to stories.

Listening to stories is important for learning about family and community, culture and country.

Being behind in talking makes learning to read hard. Reading is important for school and life.

**Listening with ear troubles is hard work. It's like trying to read through fogged up glass.**



Tell your Health Service if you see these things.

## Keep an eye on your child's ears and hearing



Watch how your child SPEAKS

### Do they:

- **At 6 months:** Not look towards sounds
- **At 18 months:** Not say simple words: 'Ma-ma'
- **At 3 years:** Not say short sentences: 'It's a dog'
- **At 5 years:** Other people can't understand them easily



Watch how your child HEARS

### Do they:

- Often not hear sounds that you can hear
- Say 'What?' a lot
- Watch your face to hear you



Watch your child's EAR HEALTH

### Do they:

- Always have a runny or crusty nose or runny, crusty or smelly ears.



## What can I do to help my child learn language?

Sit close.

Talk a lot to your child about what you see and do. Sing songs, tell stories, look at books and talk about them. All of these things are teaching language and listening.

Talk in a quiet place so your child will hear you easily.

Watch what your child is looking at. Talk to them about it.

- If they are looking at a dog, say 'It's a dog!'
- Add some new words: 'He's a brown dog.' 'Cheeky dog'

## Does my child need a hearing test?

If ear troubles last more than 3-4 months, your child should have a hearing test.

After this, the health service might ask you to see an Ear Doctor, and also us.

We will see if hearing aids will help your child while their hearing is down.





## Hearing at school with ear troubles.

Tell your child's teacher about their ear troubles so your child gets extra help.

- Tell your child to tell the teacher when they can't hear
- Ask your teacher how your child is going

## What else you can do

Children learn to do clever things like:

- Watch the teacher so they can 'see' what they say
- Watch other children to know what they should do

Tell your child to do these things.

With a hearing aid, children can use their energy for learning, not trying to listen.

## What about hearing aids?

If you think your child might need hearing aids, come see us as soon as you can.

Some schools have speakers that make the teacher's voice louder in the classroom. This is very good for many children, but not for all.

For others, hearing aids might be needed for a while. Hearing aids make hearing easy. They come in hats or headbands, or sit behind ears. Different types are right for different children.

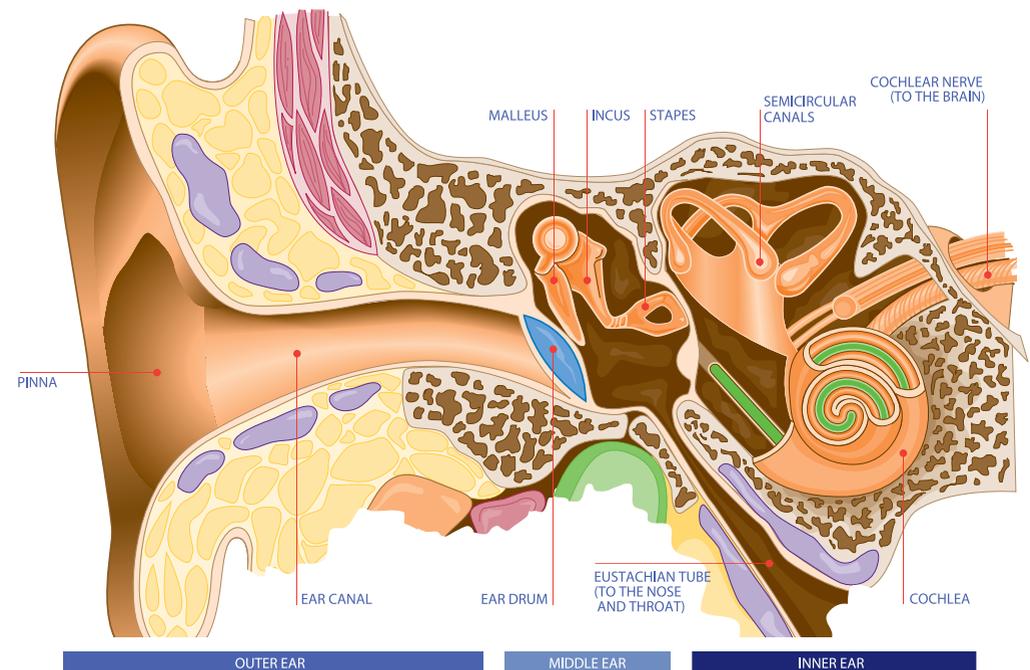
# Do you want to see Australian Hearing?

Call us on 131 797 or ask your health service to help.

Every year, about 300 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children get hearing aids for the first time. Hearing aids are free.

We have more than 100 Centres around Australia.

We come to more than 20 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities





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