

# Deaf or Hard of Hearing

## Condition Description

Permanent childhood hearing loss affects between 200 and 400 infants born in Minnesota each year. Eligibility for early intervention services for infants and toddlers based solely on a hearing loss requires audiological documentation of any of the following:

- (1) a sensorineural hearing loss with an unaided pure tone average (500,1000,2000), speech threshold, or auditory brain stem response threshold of 20 decibels hearing level (HL) or greater in the better ear;
- (2) a conductive hearing loss with an unaided pure tone average (500, 1000, 2000) or speech threshold of 20 decibels hearing level (HL) or greater in the better ear persisting over three months or occurring at least three times during the previous 12 months as verified by audiograms with at least one measure provided by a certified (licensed) audiologist;
- (3) a unilateral sensorineural or persistent conductive loss with an unaided pure tone average (500,1000,2000) or speech threshold of 45 decibels hearing level (HL) or greater in the affected ear; **or**
- (4) a sensorineural hearing loss with unaided pure tone thresholds at 35 decibels hearing level (HL) or greater at two or more adjacent frequencies (500 hertz, 1000 hertz, 2000 hertz, 3000 hertz or 4000 hertz) in the better ear.

## Consequences of Hearing Loss:

Hearing loss is associated with delayed language acquisition, learning, and speech development.

## Primary Consequences:



Minnesota Children with Special Health Needs (MCSHN)  
 85 E. 7<sup>th</sup> Place, Suite 220  
 P.O. Box 64882  
 St. Paul, MN 55164  
 1-800-728-5420 or (651) 201-3650  
[www.health.state.mn.us/mcshn](http://www.health.state.mn.us/mcshn)

Communication difficulties – Children experience varying degrees of difficulty in receiving the auditory speech and environmental stimuli.

## Secondary Consequences:

Educational, vocational, psychological and social implications – Hearing loss in young children negatively impacts speech and language acquisition, academic achievement, and social/emotional development if help for the hearing loss is delayed.

## Management of Hearing Loss:

Early diagnosis and intervention can reduce the lifelong disability associated with hearing loss. Children whose hearing loss is identified at or before six months of age and who receive appropriate early intervention services have significantly larger vocabularies and better receptive and expressive language skills than those whose hearing loss is discovered after six months.

## Medical Management:

Conductive or mixed hearing losses resulting from diseases in the outer or middle ear may be treatable through surgery or medication.

Cochlear implantation combines medical and audiological managements to provide direct electrical stimulation to the auditory nerve and allow for the perception of sound.

## Audiological Management:

Amplification may be an option for some children. This includes hearing aids, FM systems, cochlear implants or other assistive devices.

## Educational Management:

Families will make numerous choices regarding how they communicate with their child and the

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types of educational services in which they would like their child to participate.

Common communication methods include American Sign Language (ASL), Auditory-Oral, Auditory-Verbal, Bilingual-Bicultural (BiBi), Cued Speech, Simultaneous Communication, Signing Exact English, and Total Communication.

### For More Information

This fact sheet is for use in determining eligibility for early intervention services in Minnesota. For more information, the following resources might be useful.

### *Minnesota Resources*

- **Minnesota Guidelines of Care for Families with Children Who Have a Hearing Loss: A Guide to Information and Resources.** (651) 201-3650 or 1-800-728-5420  
[www.health.state.mn.us/divs/fh/mcshn/guidehr.htm](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/fh/mcshn/guidehr.htm)
- **Minnesota Hands and Voices at Lifetrack Resources.** Provides a variety of support services to families of children who are deaf or hard of hearing.  
(651) 265-2435 or 1-866-346-4543  
<http://www.familysupportconnection.org>
- **Minnesota Department of Health, Newborn and Child Follow-up,** (651) 201-3650 or 1-800-728-5420  
Provides long-term follow-up services to children and families once a diagnosis of hearing loss is confirmed. The program ensures appropriate and timely intervention and connections for families with statewide services and resources until the child transitions into adulthood. Website links to numerous resources.  
[www.health.state.mn.us/divs/fh/mcshn/ncfu/](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/fh/mcshn/ncfu/)
- **Minnesota Department of Human Services, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services.** Provides free assistance to people who are deaf and hard of hearing of all ages, their family members, human service providers, employers, schools and other interested individuals. Services include: information and referral, assistance, consultation, training, a library loan program and an equipment distribution program.

(651) 297-1316 or 888-206-6513,

[www.dhhsd.org/](http://www.dhhsd.org/)

- **Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), Part C.**  
[http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Learning\\_Support/Early\\_Learning\\_Services/Early\\_Childhood\\_Programs/Help\\_Me\\_Grow\\_Prog\\_Ser\\_v/index.html](http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Learning_Support/Early_Learning_Services/Early_Childhood_Programs/Help_Me_Grow_Prog_Ser_v/index.html)
- **MDE Specialist Contact:**  
Mary Cashman-Bakken, Phone: 507-332-5491 or 800-657-3936 for V/TTY, email: Mary.Cashman-Bakken@state.mn.us.
- **University of Minnesota Hearing Aid Loaner Bank.** New and reconditioned behind-the-ear hearing aids are available to loan for a six-month period of time. The loan period is designed to provide families with adequate time to investigate and purchase amplification for their child without delaying intervention.  
(612) 626-0946
- **PACER Center,** [www.pacer.org](http://www.pacer.org), (952) 838-9000 or 1-800-537-2237

### *National Resources*

- **My Baby's Hearing-** A website for families of children who are deaf or hard of hearing  
[www.babyhearing.org/](http://www.babyhearing.org/)
- **American Academy of Pediatrics**  
<http://www.aap.org>
- **American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA).** Contains informational fact sheets and links for parents and professionals regarding hearing loss, speech, language, hearing aids, newborn screening and deafness.  
<http://asha.org/default.htm>
- **National Center for Hearing Assessment and Management (NCHAM)** Information about implementation of newborn hearing screening programs, early identification of deafness and early intervention programs.  
(435) 797-3584. [www.infanthearing.org](http://www.infanthearing.org).