

Communicating REFER/Did Not Pass Results to Families

Newborn Hearing Screening

Minnesota Newborn Screening program



DO



Convey a positive message

- “Your baby did not pass the hearing screening. This means that further testing is needed.”
- “Follow-up with an audiologist in the next 1-2 weeks can help determine the reason your baby did not pass.”
- “It is important to follow-up right away! Testing can more easily be completed for younger babies who are more likely to sleep during testing.”
- “Even if only one ear did not pass, it is important to recheck both ears for all the important sounds.”



Provide written and verbal details on next steps

- Discuss when and where the family should follow-up.
- Discuss what barriers may prevent the family from attending follow-up. Refer to local public health for assistance if needed.
- Provide family with a written copy of the MDH “Alert: REFER Results - Hearing Screen Result Notification” that includes date, time, and location of outpatient follow-up.

DON'T



Don't be afraid to provide “REFER/ DID NOT PASS” results

- Knowing if hearing is affected early in life, and why it is affected, is important for helping the baby's development.
- Early diagnosis and education (by 3 months/6 months) can help babies who are hard of hearing stay on target with language development.
- Don't state, “Your baby failed.” Preferred language to use is, “Your baby did not pass.”
- Performing multiple rescreens in an attempt to get a pass increases the risk of getting a false pass result, and is not recommended.



Don't give misleading information

- “Your baby has a hearing loss.” The screening test only tells us that further, more detailed testing is needed.
- “There was probably fluid/debris left in the baby's ear canal.” This cannot be assumed, and needs to be evaluated by a specialist.

These statements minimize the importance of follow-up and reduce parent trust in the process:

“The baby was fussy and it wasn't a good test.”

“The equipment was not working right.”

“A lot of babies don't pass.”

“There is probably nothing wrong. Everything will be OK.”