

# Does your child have difficulty hearing?



If so, this booklet has information on some of the services available from different government organisations and other agencies that may be able to help you.

Disability Support Services



Your child may have trouble hearing if they have some of these signs:

### Infants under six months old

- Does not react to loud sounds, or wake to noise
- Not turning his/her head towards your voice by 4-6 months

### Infants 6-12 months old

- May not recognise words or understand simple phrases

### Children 1-2 years

- Does not respond to or try to locate sounds
- May not copy or repeat words and sounds to communicate
- May rely on visual clues

### Children 3 years and older

- Speech is slow compared with other children of similar age
- Talks loudly
- Listens to television at louder volume
- May have short attention span
- May have behavioral issues
- May find it hard to follow or understand verbal questions and instructions

The sooner you get the help, the better for you, your child, your family and whānau. Please contact your doctor, nurse or hearing specialist (audiologist) straight away.

## How can my child get help?

Hearing services are usually provided free of charge for your child until they leave school.

## What services are available?

### Ministry of Health



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### *Newborn Hearing Screening*

This free screen will pick up a moderate to significant hearing loss. The screen is usually done before you and your baby go home from

the hospital. You may also be able to get a screen at your hospital outpatients clinic. If another check is needed, an audiologist will carry out more tests. This service is free. If your baby has a hearing loss, the audiologist will tell you about the help available to your baby, family and whānau.

For more information, contact the National Screening Unit, Ministry of Health: [www.nsu.govt.nz](http://www.nsu.govt.nz), [screening@moh.govt.nz](mailto:screening@moh.govt.nz) or your midwife, doctor, obstetrician, local hospital, or Well Child provider.

### *Hearing Checks - Well Child/Tamariki Ora*

The *Well Child/Tamariki Ora* service is offered free to children from 4-6 weeks to five years, and includes questions about your child's hearing. *Well Child/Tamariki Ora* is provided by Plunket and other Well Child providers.



You can contact either your local Plunket or other Well Child provider directly to arrange a visit, or you can phone PlunketLine on 0800 933 922 to find out how to contact your local Well Child provider.



The *B4 School Check* is the eighth *Well Child* check. It is offered free to children at four years of age, and includes a hearing check by a Vision and Hearing Technician. You can visit [www.moh.govt.nz/b4schoolcheck](http://www.moh.govt.nz/b4schoolcheck) or phone PlunketLine on 0800 933 922 to find out how to contact your local *B4 School Check* Coordinator.

## **Assistive Devices**

### *Hearing Aids*

Hearing aids for pre-schoolers and children at school, or up to 21 years of age if they are in full time education, are fully funded by the Ministry of Health. Most children's hearing aids are fitted through the public hospital system. Some private audiology clinics also fit them, but you may need to pay for this service.



Batteries, maintenance and repairs of hearing aids for children are provided free of charge by the Deaf Education Centres. Families in

the area south of approximately New Plymouth, Taupo and the East Coast, and including the South Island, should contact van Asch Deaf Education Centre, while families in areas north of Taupo should contact the Kelston Deaf Education Centre.

### *FM System*

For children with hearing aids, a personal FM system is available. This is a device that transmits sound to a child via a receiver attached to a hearing aid, and is used to help hearing impaired children hear the teacher in a classroom.

The Ministry of Education may be able to fund a personal FM system for school age children. The Ministry of Health may also fund personal FM systems for pre-schoolers.

For more information, contact Special Education at the Ministry of Education: 0800 622 222, [special.education@minedu.govt.nz](mailto:special.education@minedu.govt.nz), [www.minedu.govt.nz/goto/specialeducation](http://www.minedu.govt.nz/goto/specialeducation), or contact your local audiology clinic at the District Health Board.

### **Cochlear Implants**

The Ministry of Health provides funding for a cochlear implant for eligible children who have a severe hearing loss, which hearing aids do not help.

If you live outside a main centre, the cost of travel to the hospital for an audiology assessment, surgery and follow up appointments may be covered through the National Travel Assistance Scheme. Find out more by calling 0800 281 222 or on the Ministry of Health website [www.moh.govt.nz/travelassistance](http://www.moh.govt.nz/travelassistance).

For more information, contact your local audiologist or Advisor on Deaf Children.

### **ACC**

If a child has had an injury that has affected their hearing, and this was caused by an accident such as an explosion, or medical treatment injury, ACC may be able to help with medical costs and other financial support. ACC does not



cover hearing loss for children caused by illness, congenital (existing from birth) or hereditary conditions.

To discuss your child's injury related needs, contact ACC: 0800 101 996.



## Education

Education and support services are provided to most children in their local schools. If an audiologist finds your child has a hearing loss, they can get assistance from an Advisor on Deaf Children. This is a free service. The Advisor will discuss what support you and your child might need.

The Advisor may also talk with you about Deaf Education Centres such as van Asch and Kelston. These centres provide education and support for children and young people who are deaf or hearing impaired and, in some cases, a residential service.

If you identify as Maori, you will be invited to meet with a Maori Special Education staff person called a Kaitakawaenga before you meet with an Advisor.

For more information, contact Special Education at the Ministry of Education: 0800 622 222, [special.education@minedu.govt.nz](mailto:special.education@minedu.govt.nz), [www.minedu.govt.nz/goto/specialeducation](http://www.minedu.govt.nz/goto/specialeducation).



## Telephone

If your child is struggling to hear on the telephone, they can use the New Zealand Relay service. With a special phone, you dial an operator and type what you want to say. The operator reads your message to the person you're calling. The operator types the person's reply and this appears on your telephone screen. All call content is confidential and no records of conversations are kept.

For more information, contact NZ Relay: 0800 4715 715, [info@nzrelay.co.nz](mailto:info@nzrelay.co.nz), [www.nzrelay.co.nz](http://www.nzrelay.co.nz).



## New Zealand Sign Language

New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) is one of New Zealand's three official languages. It is a combination of hand shapes, facial expressions and body movements and is the natural language of the Deaf community in

New Zealand. NZSL contains ideas, sayings and words that are not found in other sign languages, including signs for Te Reo Maori words and ideas. NZSL Interpreters help ensure Deaf people can access information and support. You can book interpreters through Deaf Aotearoa New Zealand.



## Television Captioning

Captions (subtitles for Deaf and hearing-impaired people) are available on many programmes on TV ONE, TV2, TV3, as well as some other channels. This is a free service funded by NZ On Air and run by TVNZ. An ear logo at the beginning of television programmes indicates that the programme has captions.

For more information about which programmes are captioned and how to access captions: 09 916 7392, [www.tvnz.co.nz/captioning](http://www.tvnz.co.nz/captioning), [captioning@tvnz.co.nz](mailto:captioning@tvnz.co.nz).

## Can I get other help with costs?

Hearing tests and hearing services are usually free for children.



## Work and Income

Financial help may be available, including:

- **Child Disability Allowance:** This allowance is for the main carer of a child or young person under 18 years who has a serious illness or disability and needs constant care and attention.
- **Disability Allowance:** The Disability Allowance is for people who have ongoing extra costs because of a disability or illness. This allowance can be paid for both adults and children under 18 years. It can help pay for things like regular visits to the doctor, medicines, special food or travel because of ill health or disability.

There are also a number of payments or advances available from Work and Income if you can't pay for immediate and essential items. Work and Income will look at your financial situation to see what help is available - you don't have to be on a benefit to get some of this help.

For more information, contact Work and Income: 0800 559 009, [www.workandincome.govt.nz](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz).

If you are Deaf, hearing-impaired, or find it hard to communicate by telephone, you can contact Work and Income on:

Deaf Link free-fax: 0800 621 621

Telephone typewriter (TTY): 0800 111 113

Text: 029 286 7170

Email: [MSD\\_Deaf\\_Services@msd.govt.nz](mailto:MSD_Deaf_Services@msd.govt.nz).

See also the helpful guide for carers at <http://www.msd.govt.nz/what-we-can-do/community/carers/index.html>.

## More information and support is available from:



### Deaf Aotearoa New Zealand

Ph: 09 828 3282, [national@deaf.co.nz](mailto:national@deaf.co.nz),  
[www.deaf.org.nz](http://www.deaf.org.nz).

Deaf Aotearoa offers education programmes, employment support and access to information and services for the Deaf and hearing impaired. It owns and operates iSign, New Zealand's online NZSL interpreter booking service, provides Deaf Awareness training workshops and other community-based programmes as well as organises the annual NZ Sign Language Week.

### Enable Information Services

Ph: 0800 17 1981, [info@enable.co.nz](mailto:info@enable.co.nz),  
[www.disabilityfunding.co.nz](http://www.disabilityfunding.co.nz).



Enable Information provides disability related information which is free and up to date.



## Kelston Deaf Education Centre

Ph: 09 827 4859, [kdec@kdec.school.nz](mailto:kdec@kdec.school.nz),  
[www.kdec.school.nz](http://www.kdec.school.nz).

Kelston Deaf Education Centre is a residential school for Deaf and hearing impaired children and their families throughout Auckland, Northland, Waikato and the Bay of Plenty.

## Ministry of Health Disability Support Services

Ph: 0800 373 664, [disability@moh.govt.nz](mailto:disability@moh.govt.nz),  
[www.moh.govt.nz/disability](http://www.moh.govt.nz/disability).



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## National Foundation for the Deaf Inc (NFD)

Ph: 0800 867 446, [enquiries@nfd.org.nz](mailto:enquiries@nfd.org.nz),  
[www.nfd.org.nz](http://www.nfd.org.nz).

NFD supports New Zealanders with hearing loss and encourages hearing preservation. It promotes the interests of people with hearing disabilities by providing advocacy, public education campaigns, information, research and educational scholarships. NFD is an incorporated society with six national member organisations, including the Hearing Association, the NZ Federation for Deaf Children, and professional groups working in the hearing disability sector.

## New Zealand Audiological Society

Ph: 0800 625 166, [mail@audiology.org.nz](mailto:mail@audiology.org.nz),  
[www.audiology.org.nz](http://www.audiology.org.nz).



The New Zealand Audiological Society is the professional organisation for audiologists who are tertiary qualified and are bound by a code of ethics. Information about hearing loss and the location of audiologists in both public clinics and private practices is available in the public area of their website.



**NZ Federation for Deaf Children Inc**  
Ph: 0800 332 324, [deafchildren@xtra.co.nz](mailto:deafchildren@xtra.co.nz),  
[www.deafchildren.org.nz](http://www.deafchildren.org.nz)

Provides support, information and networking opportunities for parents of Deaf children, as well as help for children.

**The New Zealand Society of Otolaryngology,  
Head & Neck Surgery**  
[www.ornl.org.nz](http://www.ornl.org.nz)



The Society is a professional organisation for Otolaryngologists. Otolaryngologists are doctors who have completed specialty training in the medical and surgical management of disorders of the ears, nose and throat, including hearing loss. To see an Otolaryngologist, ask your doctor for a referral, or find your nearest Otolaryngologist by using the Doctor Search function on the website.

### **van Asch Deaf Education Centre**

Ph: 03 326 6009, [info@vanasch.school.nz](mailto:info@vanasch.school.nz), [www.vanasch.school.nz](http://www.vanasch.school.nz).

van Asch Deaf Education Centre is a special school which provides a range of education services to Deaf children and their families throughout the whole of the South island and the lower part of the North Island. It provides a residential service for school age students, resources to support children's learning programmes, audiology support and technical services for children's hearing instruments and related supplies, cochlear implant technology and habilitation services.



# Notes

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