

Hearing Aid Monitoring – An Important Daily Activity

A Summary for Classroom Teachers

Why is it important?

1. It is required by law! A hearing aid check form needs to be completed to verify that hearing aid monitoring has been performed in case the school district is monitored for compliance.
2. Studies have shown that 50% of hearing aids worn by children are functioning poorly at any given time, which is why it is essential to monitor hearing aid performance.

IDEA Sec. 300.113. (a) Each public agency must ensure that hearing aids worn in school by children with hearing impairments, including deafness, are functioning properly. (b) (1) Each public agency must ensure that the external components of surgically implanted medical devices are functioning properly.

When should I perform daily hearing aid monitoring?

When the child arrives at school (before learning for the day begins) and whenever it seems that the student is not hearing as usual. The hearing aid listening check should take less than 5 minutes. Ultimately, with support and skill development, the student will perform much of the daily listening/device check independently, under classroom teacher supervision (by grade 3).

How do I perform daily hearing aid monitoring?

1. Check the battery of each hearing aid.
 - a. Best way – remove the battery and put it in the battery check device to determine level of charge. Batteries with borderline charge should be replaced prior to the school day. Be sure to insert battery with + side up!
 - b. Quick way – good for middle of the day checks. When the hearing aid is removed from the child's head, cup it in both hands and listen for a whistle (feedback), which means the battery is still working. NOTE: A battery may go 'dead' within an hour after this sort of quick test. Also, some hearing aids may have feedback control which prevents this type of quick test.
2. Take a good look at the hearing aid and earmold
 - a. Does the earmold seem plugged with wax? This will prevent the sound from being delivered to the child's ear. Does the tubing easily pull out of the earmold?
 - b. Are there any cracks or bubbles of moisture in the tubing or earhook that goes above the child's ear?
 - c. Is there any dirt, visible cracks or any other sign that indicates that the hearing aid may have been dropped or mistreated?
3. Listen to the hearing aid
 - a. Place the stethoset in your ears. Put the earmold into the 'cup' and slowly turn up the volume. Say the sounds aw, oo, ee, sh, s, th, m. All should sound clear without any scratchiness or interruptions.
4. Monitor the child's performance of the hearing aid self-test as he puts on one hearing aid at a time. He will put on one hearing aid, turn it on and then say bah, bah, bah, sh, sh, sh as a way to test that the hearing aid is providing amplification and that it sounds typical. Then the second aid is put on. If both hearing aids are put on and then the self-test is performed it is very hard for a child to be able to hear if one hearing aid is not performing as it should.
5. Check to see if the hearing aids have been inserted properly. The top 'peak' should be tucked in to the skin folds of the ear and the bottom part of the earmold should be pushed in all the way.
6. Finally, perform the Ling Sound Listening Check.

