

## My child hears perfectly fine in one ear. Why should I be worried?

- Two ears help us know where sound is coming from.
- Two ears help us understand speech better in noisy places.
- Language learning may be slowed because your child misses parts of what is said:
  - ⇒ at a distance,
  - ⇒ In noisy places
  - ⇒ When the good ear is not facing the speaker
- If your child does not behave the way you want, it might be that he or she did not hear everything you said.
- Ear infections increase the chance for language delays. If you think your child has an ear infection:
  - ⇒ Get prompt medical care
  - ⇒ Use up all medicine as prescribed
  - ⇒ Follow up with your child's doctor as recommended.

Not all children with unilateral hearing loss have:

- ⇒ Slower language learning
- ⇒ Poor patterns of listening
- ⇒ Behavior issues.

**But** you can take steps to give your child the best chance. And Early Steps can help.

## HELP IS AVAILABLE

- Learn about unilateral hearing loss
- Learn about what you can do to help your child's development
- Monitor language development
- Monitor hearing ability

Contact your Local Early Intervention office by calling:

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2 out of every 1000 young children have permanent unilateral hearing loss.



# Hearing Loss in One Ear Unilateral Hearing Loss

*Children with unilateral hearing loss are at 10 times the risk for learning problems compared to children with 2 normal hearing ears.*



References: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/ehdi/unilateralhi.htm>  
[http://www.audiologyonline.com/articles/article\\_detail.asp?article\\_id=357](http://www.audiologyonline.com/articles/article_detail.asp?article_id=357)

This pamphlet developed by [www.kandersonaudconsulting.com](http://www.kandersonaudconsulting.com)

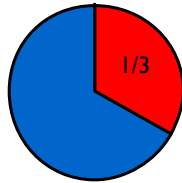
**What Parents Should Know!**

## Hearing with two ears is better than one!

### Language Learning

Many children with unilateral hearing loss have problems learning language. It can be as many as one out of three.

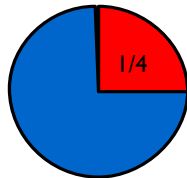
Language Learning Problems



### Changes in Hearing Loss

Some children with permanent hearing loss lose some or all of their hearing in their good hearing ear. It can be as many as one out of four.

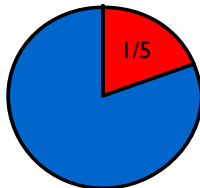
Hearing Changes in Better Ear



### Behavior

Children with hearing loss may find it hard to hear directions and soft speech. That can lead to frustration and poor behavior. One out of five children may have problems like this.

Possible Behavior Problems



### What are some things I can do?

- Get early intervention services to help you learn ways to prevent delays in learning and speech. Your audiologist should refer you. Someone can come to your home at no cost to you.
- Ease your mind by making sure your child's learning is on target. A language check-up twice a year is all it takes. The checkup lasts only an hour.
- Protect your child's hearing. Your child's hearing can be permanently harmed by loud noises. Guard the hearing in the good hearing ear.
- If you think your child may have an ear infection get medical help quickly!
- Remember 1/4 of children with hearing loss in one ear develop it in the other ear. Get your child's hearing checked by your audiologist every 3-6 months. Early Steps may be able to cover this expense.

*Every six months someone from early intervention can come to your home and help you fill out checklists that will compare your child's language learning with other children the same age. Many children do not show any difficulty until they are 15 - 18 months old. Normal results on early checklists does not mean that problems cannot develop.*

### Consider more hearing

Depending on your child's hearing loss a hearing aid or FM system may really help. Try a loaner hearing device for 3-6 months. If your child is one of the 25% who develop hearing loss in both ears, then using a hearing aid at an early age can make a world of difference in stimulating brain development and language. Rely on your hearing professional to help you find the best solution for you and your child. If it looks like a hearing aid or FM system will help your child develop better, Early Steps may be able to pay for it.

### Would an amplification device really help my child?

A hearing aid doesn't help every child with unilateral hearing loss. The only way to tell is to try one and watch for improved listening. Other parents of children with unilateral hearing loss have tried hearing aids. Here is what they said:

- *He doesn't talk so loud when wearing his aid.*
- *He was missing one half of everything before he got his aid.*
- *He hears sounds he never heard before.*
- *Doesn't interrupt people in group situations now.*
- *It is a very positive thing.*
- *Audiologists and doctors say children with only one good hearing ear will be fine—they are not fine.*

