



Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Foundation Trust: Information for Families

Helping your child get used to headphones before a hearing assessment

Your child is due to come to the Audiology department at Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) for a hearing assessment. Further information about the tests is available at www.gosh.nhs.uk/medical-information/clinical-specialties/audiological-medicine-information-parents-and-visitors/audiological-medicine-department.

This will usually mean they have to wear headphones for some or all of the tests. We realise that some children find this difficult, so have provided this information to give you some suggestions for how to get your child used to wearing headphones beforehand.

Using headphones allows us to test each ear separately – this helps us check for any one-sided hearing problems that affect just one ear. The headphones we use look like this.

If you have a pair of 'over ear' headphones at home, you can help them get used to wearing them before the assessment. This can help them to be more relaxed during the assessment so that we can get better results from the tests.



Stage 1 – Put the headphones over your child's ears and play them familiar music at a low volume but loud enough that they can hear

If your child gets upset, try to distract them with something they enjoy, such as a toy or bubbles or even food. If they stay upset, try again later or the next day to see if they react any better. The important thing is to keep trying.

Wearing the headphones yourself or involving brothers and sisters to set an example can also be helpful. Perhaps a favourite toy could wear the headphones for a short time, while they play.

If your child carries on being upset by the headphones, we would like you to persevere and keep trying. However, if you feel like they are becoming too distressed you may want to stop and possibly try another day. If your child can wear headphones, we can get better information about their hearing during the assessment.

Stage 2 – Getting ready for the hearing test

Depending on the age of your child, one of the hearing tests will involve your child putting a toy in a bucket when they hear a sound. Your child does not need to understand what the audiologist says but just copy what they do. Some children struggle with the concept of waiting, so it would help if you can practise the following game before the appointment.

You will need:

- A toy with several bits or a few different toys – such as building blocks, balls, small toy cars
- A container large enough to hold all the toys – such as a crate or bucket

Instructions

- 1. First it is your turn** – show your child that you are holding one of the toys, say “go” loud enough for your child to hear then put the toy in the container. Repeat this step three or four times.
- 2. Next, you play the game together** – put one of the toys into your child’s hand and help them to wait until you say “go” to put the toys in the container. Repeat this step three or four times or until you think your child understands what to do.
- 3. Finally, it is your child’s turn on their own**
 - give them a toy to hold, wait a few seconds and then say “go”. See if they put the toy in the container without any encouragement.
 - **If they wait for you to say “go”**
 - encourage them with praise
 - **If they put the toy in the container before you have said “go”** – take the toys out and help them to wait for you to say “go” by holding the toy with them
 - **If they do not do anything** – encourage them to put the toy in the container and carry on practising.
4. Once they understand the idea, repeat step 3 with the rest of the toys.

We appreciate the practice you carry out at home and look forward to seeing your child at the assessment.

If you have any questions about the assessment or getting ready for it, please call 020 7813 8315