

hearing and amplification

Newborn Screening

Why is Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Important?

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It is important to find hearing loss as early as possible, because babies start learning how to use sound as soon as they are born. Listening in the first months of life prepares babies to speak.

By their first birthday, babies are already learning what words mean. Babies start by babbling, using many of the sounds they hear spoken around them. These early steps are building blocks for communication.

Babies learn to talk by listening to their families talk around them. Imagine that a baby has a hearing loss, but no one knows about it. This can lead to slow development of speech. These delays can lead to problems in school later on. Finding hearing loss early can help prevent delays in speaking and learning.

Hospitals regularly screen newborn babies for a number of conditions, such as genetic disorders. It is interesting to know that hearing loss happens more often than any other problems or conditions that are screened at birth. About one to three babies out of every 1000 will be born with a permanent hearing loss. Because of this number, many hospitals offer hearing screening programs.

