

# **DAILY HEARING AID CHECK**

## **Step One: Examine the aid for damage**

Make sure the case is not cracked or broken, that the earmold is not plugged with earwax, or that the tubing does not come out of the earmold. If you notice major problems that you cannot fix (like remove wax), notify the parents right away and ask them to get it repaired.

## **Step Two: Check the battery**

Test the battery with a battery tester. The operation of testers is different, so make sure that you know how to use your battery tester. An indicator of some type will register whether the battery is "good" or needs replacing. Batteries should be checked every day, even if you put a new battery in just the day before. If you replace a battery, this should be noted so that you can easily see if batteries are being used too frequently (sometimes indicating a problem), and to let parents know how often they need to provide batteries to the school.

## **Step Three: Use a stethoscope to listening to the hearing aids**

Once you have examined the aid and checked the battery, you need to listen to sound quality of the hearing aid. It is not enough to hear a whistle (feedback) from the hearing aid and assume it is working correctly. It is a good idea to listen to the hearing aid every day to detect sound problems that can occur as a result of a short in a cord, moisture or dirt in the aid, or other problems that impact the aid. You can also detect sounds that would indicate that the hearing aid is set on the telephone setting. Not all hearing aids have on/off switches or volume controls. You need to learn from the parent, the child or someone with knowledge how the hearing aid works. The point of the listening check is to listen for problems, or differences that were not there before that interfere with the operation of the aid. You also need to check to make sure that the FM is working and that you hear the teacher's voice through the FM microphone.

## **Step Four: Check for feedback**

Place the earmold in the child's ear after the aid is set on the volume recommended by the audiologist. The earmold should fit securely in his ear and should not whistle (this is feedback). If you do hear feedback, remove the aid and cover the opening of the canal in the earmold with your thumb. Turn up the volume. Do you hear feedback? If you do there is a problem with the aid itself. If not, you know the problem is the earmold is no longer fitting the child. New

earmolds need to be made frequently (every 4-6 months) for a young child who is growing rapidly.

## **Step Five: Ling Sound Test**

A daily check of a child's ability to detect, discriminate, or repeat the Ling Sounds also gives information on how well the child is hearing with the hearing aid on that day. Some children will only be able to detect your voice, and maybe not for the sibilant sounds (i.e. "s"). The goal is to make sure a child does not get worse in their ability. If they could repeat the ling sounds last week and this week are missing some, then that may be an indication that they are not hearing as well. There are many reasons for that including middle ear disease, earwax, or the malfunction of the hearing aid. You need to inform the parent that the sound check was different, whether or not you feel there are problems with the hearing aid, etc. You may want to watch this for a few days before informing parents to document that there has really been a change.

## **Documentation**

Your hearing aid check should be documented whenever you complete it. The documentation needs to include the date and check marks for all five steps completed. There should be a comments section.

## **CONCLUSION**

Just like glasses, hearing aids will not help a child if they are not worn. They also will not help him if they are not working properly. No child should ever have to suffer an additional hearing impairment because the professionals are not making sure the hearing aids are turned on, set properly, and working. If you are not sure how to check your child's (or student's) hearing aid, contact a teacher of the deaf, or the hearing aid dealer or audiologist who prescribed the aid. You wouldn't let a child use a wheelchair that was broken. Why should you let him use a hearing aid that wasn't working?