

Ultimate Hearing Loss Gift Guide

From babies to seniors, if there is someone with hearing loss on your gift list this year, check out these suggestions to help you pick the perfect present.

For babies, toddlers, and children:

Check out this guide to [Choosing Toys for Children with Hearing Loss](#), which includes tips for evaluating the toys you see in stores and my go-to toy list with all the basics you need to encourage speech, language, and listening development at various ages and stages.

Other great toys:

- Flannel and magnet board sets
- Mr. Potato Head
- Dress-up clothes
- Dollhouse, dolls, and furniture
- Puppets (I have been able to find great puppets consistently at dollar stores)
- Barn with animals, tractor, etc.
- Kitchen with play food
- Baby dolls and accessories
- Shape sorter
- Ring stacker
- Musical instruments
- [Melissa and Doug](#) is a toy company that sells many classic, well-made, creative toys for children. (Use code FF25 for free shipping on orders over \$25 in the contiguous United States and code SAVE10 for \$10 off your purchase of \$60 or more.)
- [Zulily](#) is a flash sale site with deals that last only a few days. They often have flash sales of high-quality preschool toys that you can buy for great discounts. Sign up for their email list to get updates.
- Because many toys on this list are durable classics, they're easy to find at garage sales and consignment stores. A quick clean with an antiseptic wipe, and they're good as new!

For tweens and teens:

- Give an experience. Who says a gift has to fit in a box? Sometimes the most fun gifts (and great language and bonding experiences) might be a road trip with a parent, tickets to a concert, or an indoor rock-climbing expedition with friends. Think outside the box!
- A do-it-yourself kit. What does your teen or tween love? Fashion design? Music? Cooking? Electronics? Why not search out a great do-it-yourself kit and let him try his hand at it at home? These kits require lots of reading comprehension, critical thinking, and patience, and

leave your teen feeling accomplished! There are tons out there to make everything from your own custom-designed sneakers to your own stereo speakers.

- Creative diaries, journals, or make-your-own books. Tweens and teens need privacy and space to discover who they are. Why not combine this developmentally-appropriate desire with a chance to express themselves through writing? Rather than a blank diary, there are many creative options out there with prompts to encourage writing, like the [Letters to My Future Self](#), [My Comic Book Kit](#), [One Line A Day Journal](#), or the [Chill and Spill Journal](#) (specifically for teens!).
- [Uncommon Goods](#) has a great selection of off-beat toys, games, and books that can't be found elsewhere — sure to make a unique gift for the hard-to-impress tween or teen.

For music lovers (or those learning to be music lovers):

- Many hearing device users like to use over-the-ear headphones to listen to music, with good reviews for [Beats](#) brand.
- Others prefer direct-connect cables, which can be purchased through your device manufacturer.
- [Music Links](#) are induction loop hooks that fit over the ear to help hearing device users enjoy music via telecoil.

Great games:

- [Apples to Apples](#): This game of words has each player submit a noun to match an adjective (for example, if the adjective is “Stinky,” a player could submit, “My socks” or “School lunch” or even “My brother!”), and comes in a Junior version for children, too.
- [Catchphrase](#): Can you describe the word before your time runs out? This is a great game for working on describing words for tweens, teens, and adults.
- [Anomia](#): This tricky game involves matching symbols and blurting out members of categories — sure to get anyone tongue-tied.
- [Pop-Up Pirate](#): A great game for kids, this game elicits lots of language as you take chances and predict which sword will be the one to make the pirate jump out of his barrel. It scares me every time!
- [Barnyard Bingo](#): Perfect for little listeners who are working on their beginning Learning to Listen Sounds as well as matching colors.
- [Uno](#): On the surface, this game could be played silently, but if you think about it, there are lots of language opportunities here to talk about matching, reversing, wild cards, etc. I especially like this game for older children with lower language levels, because it allows them to participate in an age-appropriate game with minimal language demands while still working to grow new skills.

Hearing device bling:

- **Skinit**: Removable decals available for all three FDA-approved CI brands (and their remotes!). You can use their images or upload your own.
- **Ear Gear**: Neoprene covers to fit all sizes of hearing aids, cochlear implants, and Baha devices, these covers protect hearing equipment from moisture, dirt, and damage, and also allow you to change your style as often as you like. They come in corded versions to help prevent device lost, and can also be made in your own custom designs. Stay tuned for their 30% off Black Friday Sale, running 11/28-12/1/2014. (*Full disclosure: I am paid as a consultant for Ear Gear, but am not being compensated to include this in the Gift Guide nor am I compensated based on your purchases.*)
- **Hayleigh's Cherished Charms**: These dangling charms attach to hearing aids and cochlear implants to provide decoration and come in a variety of designs, including animals, sparkles, sports, and more.
- **Hearing Henry**: These headbands help keep cochlear implants on for young children and sports fans of all ages and come in a variety of soft cotton colors.
- **The Bebop Shop**: Charming hearing device retention clips with matching decoration for your CI magnet.
- CI and hearing aid companies also sell a variety of accessories for their devices. Would the person on your list appreciate a waterproofing kit? A new set of colorful covers? A wireless streaming device? Check the manufacturer's website to see what's available.

Everyday gear:

- A vibrating, flashing, and/or extra loud **alarm clock** can come in handy for anyone with hearing loss, and, unlike in years past, they come in some great designs now, too!
- There are a number of other adaptive devices, for everything from smoke alarms to baby monitors to captioned phones, that can greatly enhance the day-to-day life of people with hearing loss. Check them out [here](#).
- **Aloksak bags, Otterboxes, and Nammu** hats can keep hearing equipment safe and dry in and around the water. (Be sure to follow your manufacturer's instructions.)
- Show your pride with tote bags, t-shirts, mugs, and more featuring great cochlear implant, AVT, and hearing loss-related designs from the **Cochlear Implant Online store**. All proceeds are donated to charities which support people with hearing loss and their families.
- These "**inner ear" rings** are a clever gift for the audiology junkie in your life.
- A medical alert bracelet is a must-have for CI wearers, as they cannot undergo MRIs or monopolar cautery without prior clearance from their CI surgeon and manufacturer. I would argue that all people with hearing loss should wear a medical ID indicating that they are deaf or hard of hearing — in case of an accident, if your hearing device flies off and you are unconscious or otherwise unable to communicate, this is important for medical personnel to know. But just because a medical alert bracelet is functional doesn't mean it can be fashionable, cool, or cute. Here are a few shops that sell really great ones: **Lauren's Hope, Hope Paige, N-Style ID, The ID Band Co, and Creative Medical ID** (enter code holiday14 to take 15% off).

Recommended reads:

- For babies, toddlers, and young children, here is a list of [Books with Lots of Learning to Listen Sounds.](#)
- If you need help choosing a good book, check out [Books for Shared Reading: Choosing Them, Changing Them.](#)
- Some clever books that I've been loving lately include: [Press Here](#), [Gallop](#), [Pete the Cat](#), and [Born to Read](#).
- There are several great biographies/memoirs about hearing loss that might appeal to teens and adults, including: [Sounds from Silence: Graeme Clark and the Bionic Ear Story](#) (Graeme Clark, inventor of the Nucleus multichannel CI), [Yes You Can, Heather: The Story of Heather Whitestone, Miss America 1995](#) (written by Heather's mother, Daphne Gray), [Listening with My Heart](#) (Heather's own memoir), and many, many others available on Amazon.com or in bookstores.
- Audiobooks can be great practice for tweens, teens, and adults looking to practice their listening skills. Many libraries now offer not only books on CD for checkout, but the ability to "rent" MP3 files of books through the library's website.
- [EaR Books](#) are developmentally-appropriate children's literature featuring characters with bilateral cochlear implants. The books are available in hardcover, paperback, and ebook format, as well as in English and Spanish. I am the author of these books and they are illustrated by bilateral CI user Rachel Chaikof. We make no profit off of these books – all proceeds are donated to charities which support people with hearing loss and their families.