

# Hearing loss and your baby: the next step

An information resource for families in NSW



A NSW Statewide Infant Screening-Hearing Program initiative

**NSW**  **HEALTH**

# The NSW Statewide Infant Screening–Hearing (SWISH) Program

The NSW Statewide Infant Screening — Hearing (SWISH) Program is aimed at identifying all babies born in NSW with significant permanent bilateral hearing loss by 3 months of age, and for those children to be able to access appropriate intervention by 6 months of age. Identification is achieved through universal hearing screening of all newborns.

Technology is available to diagnose hearing problems in the neonatal period. Early identification and intervention are important, with research suggesting that intervention commencing by 6 months of age may result in optimal speech and language development and minimise the need for ongoing special education.

Each Area Health Service has SWISH Coordinators responsible for implementing and managing the screening program across all facilities in their Area. This model allows SWISH Coordinators flexibility to meet unique needs in their Area Health Service. SWISH Coordinators have adopted innovative approaches to ensure maximum screening capture such as service agreements with private hospitals and employing dedicated screeners to meet local needs (eg. Indigenous and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse populations).

The screening section of the program involves the screening of all newborns in NSW using Automated Auditory Brainstem Response (AABR) technology. If newborns do not pass hearing screening they

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are referred for diagnostic audiological assessment. Parent/carer brochures describing the SWISH program are available in English and 16 other community languages, in both paper form and via the NSW Health website.

SWISH diagnostic audiology services are provided through the three tertiary paediatric hospitals which are the acute care hubs of the three paediatric services networks which cover the state. Newborns receive an audiological diagnosis, as well as medical assessments to assist with selecting appropriate intervention. The SWISH Travel Assistance Scheme was established to reimburse parents for the cost of travel where they live a considerable distance from a tertiary paediatric hospital.

Following diagnosis, newborns are referred to intervention services appropriate to the degree of hearing loss, specific medical diagnosis and parental preference.

The following pages are for you to record information on your baby's hearing loss. We have included pages for the diagnostic appointment, a space for recording contact details of your audiologist and other specialists who may be involved in your baby's care, a planning calendar, and a checklist for choosing your early intervention services.

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## Summary of today's visit

	Today's date
Baby's name:	Baby's date of birth:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for bringing \_\_\_\_\_  
for a hearing assessment today.

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### During today's assessment the following was found:

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Right Ear

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Left Ear

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Overall these results indicate:

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Referrals made to:

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**A full report of today's assessment will be posted to you in the next few weeks, please keep for future reference. Please feel free to contact me by phone if you have any questions about today's visit.**

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Audiologist	
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Phone number	
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## Professionals

Specialist	Contact information
Audiologist	
Ear, Nose & Throat specialist	
Eye specialist (Ophthalmologist)	
General Practitioner	
Geneticist	

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Specialist	Contact information
Paediatrician	
Plastic Surgeon	
Social Worker	
Speech Pathologist	
Teachers of the Deaf	

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## Planning calendar

January	February	March
1	1	1
2	2	2
3	3	3
4	4	4
5	5	5
6	6	6
7	7	7
8	8	8
9	9	9
10	10	10
11	11	11
12	12	12
13	13	13
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23	23	23
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28	28	28
29		29
30		30
31		31

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## Planning calendar

April	May	June
1	1	1
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8	8	8
9	9	9
10	10	10
11	11	11
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	31	

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## Planning calendar

July	August	September
1	1	1
2	2	2
3	3	3
4	4	4
5	5	5
6	6	6
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8	8	8
9	9	9
10	10	10
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31	31	

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## Planning calendar

October	November	December
1	1	1
2	2	2
3	3	3
4	4	4
5	5	5
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8	8	8
9	9	9
10	10	10
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## Choosing an early intervention program checklist

This checklist is designed as a guide to assist parents and carers who will be visiting early intervention centres in order to determine the best program for their child.

General information	
Name of service	
Address	
Phone number	
Director / coordinator's name	
Holiday closures (public holidays, school holidays, other)	
Who funds the service?	
Will we be required to assist with fund-raising?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

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## Choosing an early intervention program checklist

Programs	
How many sessions per week?	
Are the sessions	Home-based <input type="checkbox"/> Centre-based <input type="checkbox"/> Combination <input type="checkbox"/> Remote <input type="checkbox"/>
Is the program based on the child's individual needs?	
Is there a playgroup? If so, how are the children grouped?	
What is the main communication of the program?	Oral <input type="checkbox"/> Signing <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>
My child has other disabilities, is there other support available?	
Does the service offer other support services?	Family counselling <input type="checkbox"/> Speech therapy <input type="checkbox"/> Audiological support <input type="checkbox"/> Physiotherapy <input type="checkbox"/> Occupational therapy <input type="checkbox"/> Sign language tuition for parents and family members <input type="checkbox"/>

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## Choosing an early intervention program checklist

### Programs

Who will be responsible for planning my child's program?

How does the service liaise with other professionals and agencies working with my child and family?

How will my child's progress be evaluated?

Will I receive written reports of my child's progress?

How does the service involve me in decisions relating to my child's current and future needs?

Who do I contact if I have concerns about my child?

What do I do if I am not satisfied with my child's assessment, program or progress?

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## Choosing an early intervention program checklist

### Staff

What qualifications do the staff have?

(You want staff to be trained or experienced in early childhood development and hearing loss.)

Are the teachers skilled in the communication method used by the school? (e.g. Auslan)

Can the staff be readily contacted between appointments if necessary?

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## Choosing an early intervention program checklist

### Parent Information

Is there a parent information handbook I can read?

Is there a parent support group or opportunity for parents to meet other parents?

Is there a parent education program?

Is there an accredited interpreter available to help me when I talk to staff?

Are you welcome to visit any area or room of the service at any time without an appointment?

Can you be involved in the operation or management of the service?

Is there help for non-English speaking families?

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## Choosing an early intervention program checklist

### Environment

Are the children and staff busy, relaxed and happy?

Are toys and equipment in good repair?

Are fences and gates well maintained, childproofed, and the outside area well cared for?

Are the play areas, bathroom and kitchen areas clean?

Is the centre physically easy to access?

- Parking
- Public Transport
- Outdoor area, steps, etc

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## Choosing an early intervention program checklist

### Rural and/or remote early intervention programs

Who is eligible?

How will the program help my child?

How does the program work?

What services are offered?

What resources are there for parents?

What are the hours of operation?

Is there a cost?

How long can I stay with the service?