

How can I protect my child's hearing?

Loud sounds or ear infections can cause additional hearing loss. Teach your child how to help them-self hear better and to protect their own hearing.

- Take your child to the doctor right away if you think they may have an ear infection. An ear infection might make it harder to hear.
- Buy your child earplugs or ear muffs to wear when going to fireworks, a concert, or places with loud sounds. Make sure the ear plugs or ear muffs are the right size for your child's ears.
- Don't play loud music in the car. Make sure your child keeps the volume down when playing video games or listening to MP3 players, the TV, or the radio.



How can I make my home listening friendly?

- Use large area rugs if you don't have wall-to-wall carpeting
- Wait until your child is sleeping or out of the house before turning on noisy appliances such as the dishwasher or washing machine
- Turn off the TV or radio while eating dinner or when talking to your child



Office for Children with Special Health Care Needs
Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program
310 Whittington Parkway Suite 200
Louisville KY 40222
1-877-757-4327
502-429-4430 ext. 2027

<http://chfs.ky.gov/ccshcn>
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Early Hearing Detection and Intervention

Unilateral Hearing Loss:
A Parent's Guide

KENTUCKY EHDI
EARLY HEARING DETECTION & INTERVENTION



About Unilateral Hearing Loss

What causes UHL?

UHL can be present at birth or can happen later on. In many cases, doctors are not sure what causes UHL. We do know some possible causes of UHL in young children include:

- Hearing loss that runs in the family
- An outer, middle, or inner ear problem
- Specific syndromes
- Certain illnesses

Why does UHL make it harder for my child to hear?

A child with UHL may have a harder time telling where sound is coming from. Your child may:

- Be unable to tell which direction sound is coming from or who is speaking. This is called localization.
- Have a hard time understanding what people are saying in noisy situations such as a classroom or crowded mall.
- Not understand all the words a person is saying.
- Not be able to hear speech or sounds clearly from a distance. When two ears with “normal” hearing listen together, sounds seem louder. With UHL, your child can often hear what people are saying, but may not be able to understand what is being said.

How will I know if my child is having trouble hearing?

Your child may:

- Get easily frustrated
- Seem overly tired at the end of the day
- Appear not to be paying attention
- Respond incorrectly to a question or request
- “Act out” due to frustration

How can I help my child hear and understand what I am saying?

Position your child so that their “good side”-the ear that is working-is toward you.

- When possible, place your child with their “normal” hearing ear facing you. Do this at the dinner table, in the car, or while your child is in a stroller. In a noisy area, you may want to move closer to your child.
- Position your child with their “normal” hearing ear directed away from the noise. This can include the dishwasher, air conditioner, fan, TV, or radio.
- Look at your child when you speak. Use facial expressions such as smiling or a look of surprise to give your child clues.
- Do not talk to your child from another room. They may not understand what you are saying.

Start conversations by taking turns talking!

- Get your child’s attention before talking to them.
- Talk about what you are doing within your daily routine. For example, say, “I am making your sandwich. Here is your milk.”

Encourage listening, such as “Did you hear the phone ring?”

- Help your child localize where the sound is coming from. For example, “Look over there at that dog barking.”
- Play listening games to help your child try to listen to the sounds around them. For example, say, “What do you hear? I hear a car and a bird.”

Help expand your child’s vocabulary

- Help your child expand their vocabulary by using more words. If your child says the word, “good”, use another word for good, like “terrific”.
- Ask your child questions that require more than a yes or no answer. Asking open-ended questions gives your child a chance to practice talking and listening.

