

Aural Habilitation Therapy

What is aural habilitation therapy?

Aural habilitation (AH) therapy is given to children with hearing loss who use cochlear implants or hearing aids. It teaches children and families strategies and techniques to help their child develop communication skills through listening. The therapy includes helping children develop listening and language skills, improve speech, support communication and learn how to manage hearing aids and cochlear implants.



A child with a cochlear implant practices listening and talking with his dad. Parents play a central role in AH therapy.

Developing listening skills

Developing listening skills involves attaching meaning to sound. It includes:

- Detecting sound and sound awareness (e.g. “I hear something”)
- Hearing differences between different sounds or words like “hop” vs. “hot”
- Identifying what has been heard (“that sound I hear is a dog barking”)
- Comprehending what has been said. This includes understanding conversation and following directions.

Developing language skills

Developing language skills through listening is a complex process that includes:

- Understanding language (this is called receptive language)
- Using language (this is called expressive language)

To Learn More

- Childhood Communication Center
206-987-3853
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- www.seattlechildrens.org

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your child's nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.

- Teaching basic concepts and vocabulary
- Understanding the rules of grammar
- Using language in social situations

Managing communication

We will work with your family and child to help you:

- Understand hearing loss
- Develop skills to use in different listening and social situations

Taking care of hearing aids and cochlear implants

We will teach your child and family how to care for and solve problems with your child's hearing aids or cochlear implants.

How does this differ from speech and language therapy?

Both types of therapy are for children with speech and language delays or who are at risk for delays. Aural habilitation therapy is for children who have auditory, speech and language difficulties due to hearing loss. Children who receive speech and language therapy also have delays, but they may not be due to hearing loss.

How do I know if aural habilitation is right for my child?

The best way to see if aural habilitation would be helpful is to get an auditory skills evaluation for your child. During the evaluation, a specialist will assess your child's listening, language and speech skills and determine if aural habilitation is right for your child.

If your child has hearing loss and speech and language difficulties, contact the Childhood Communication Center at 206-987-3853 to learn about an evaluation