

ARE YOU SURE YOUR CHILD CAN HEAR WELL?

A group of experts in how young children learn to read have just written a booklet for parents about their children's hearing.* Why? Well, like us, these reading experts **want all children to do well in school and the ability to hear is absolutely critical to a child's success.**

Just think how much a child would miss, if she couldn't hear well. Obviously, she might miss what her teacher's saying. And she could also miss what the other children were saying, along with all the songs, music and the sound in videos and movies. **Even with a mild hearing loss, things just wouldn't be the same at all.**

Are you sure your baby's, toddler's or preschooler's hearing is as good as it can be? Did you know that when he has an ear infection or when his head is clogged with a bad cold and you have to wipe his nose every other minute, chances are good he's not hearing very well? All that mucous clogs his ears and muffles sounds. **So when a little child has ear infection after ear infection, or suffers from allergies much of the year, he might not be able to hear you and others around him very well. And that might have an effect on how he learns to talk.**

Watch for signs that your baby, toddler or preschooler might not be hearing as well as she could. If she doesn't seem to be paying much attention to your directions; if she seems to misunderstand what people say a lot; if she asks you or others to repeat what they say; or if she seems to be having trouble saying what she'd like to say, she might have a hearing problem. **Please don't wait for your child "to outgrow" what might be a hearing loss.**

We hope your little child's hearing was checked before he was 3 months old. **And if he's had problems with ear infections and head colds or allergies, we hope his hearing has continued to be checked often.** If not, ask your medical provider to examine your child's hearing now or to refer you to someone who can.

In the meantime, whether or not your child has a problem hearing, **it's always a good idea to make sure you have her attention when you're talking to her. And be sure that she can see your face when you're talking.** Don't forget to sing, talk and read to her every day. **All little children benefit from dancing, singing, and hearing music and listening to their family's language as much as possible when they're learning to talk.**

*You can order a copy of "Your Child's Hearing is Important," by calling the International Reading Association Call Center at 1-800-628-8508 or you can visit their website at <http://marketplace.reading.org>. Go to the "books" area and then click on "parents" under the subject headings.