

## **HEARING ASSESSMENT - GUIDE FOR CAREGIVERS**

### **WHY DOES MY CHILD NEED A HEARING ASSESSMENT?**

In most cases it is difficult to tell if a child has a hearing difficulty simply by observing him/her. A hearing assessment helps us determine if your child's hearing is:

1. Normal - does not have a hearing difficulty
2. Not normal - how bad is it? Mild? Severe? One ear only? Both ears?  
Does he/she need hearing aid(s)? Is it affecting his/her learning?  
Is it affecting his/her attention and behaviour?

### **WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE HEARING ASSESSMENT?**

The Audiologist might start by asking you some basic questions about your child. Next the audiologist will perform some tone tests.

Air Conduction (AC) Test: Your child will wear either a headphone or a soft, foam earplug and the tester will then let your child listen to sounds using a machine called an audiometer. Your child will be asked to respond whenever he/she hears a tone. The tester will find the softest tone that your child can hear.

Next, the tester will do a Bone Conduction (BC) Test. This test checks the inner ear and the hearing nerve. Your child will have a small bone-conduction vibrator placed behind his/her ear. The sound from the audiometer will be sent through the bone vibrator. Again, your child will be asked to respond whenever he/she hears a tone and the tester will find the softest tone that your child can hear.

By testing the whole hearing system (air conduction) and then just part of the system (bone-conduction), we can discover which part of the hearing mechanism is not working properly.

Sometimes another test called the Tympanogram is required to check how well the middle ear is working. The tester will place a small probe into your child's ear canal. A small pump will then take some air out of the canal and then put extra air back in to see how well the eardrum moves in and out. There is usually no pain at all, just a slight feeling of discomfort in the ear.

### **WHERE CAN I HAVE MY CHILD'S HEARING ASSESSED?**

Hearing assessments are offered at Singapore General Hospital (SGH), National University Hospital (NUH) and KK Women's and Children's Hospital (KKH), as well as by private audiology clinics listed in the Yellow Pages. (Assessment charges vary.)

If a hearing loss is confirmed, the audiologist will refer your child to an Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) Doctor for further assessment.

For hearing assessments done at SGH, NUH or KKH, please note that subsidised rates only apply to Singaporeans and Permanent Residents referred by a Polyclinic."

### **I NEED MORE HELP. WHO SHALL I TALK TO?**

Please feel free to call the Admissions/Support Officer coordinating Admissions & Review at 6479 6252 if you need further explanation or need some of your concerns addressed.

## WHAT SHOULD I DO NOW?

If you have decided to send your child to a hospital for the hearing assessment, here's a checklist of what you should do. The same goes for private practices except that you do not need a referral from the polyclinic.

- Make an appointment with a polyclinic near you.
- Let the doctor know where you want your child to be referred for a hearing assessment.
- Make an appointment with the Audiologist.
- Do not send your child for a hearing assessment if he/she has a cold/flu or sick. Cancel the appointment with the audiologist and make another one.
- Days before the appointment, talk to your child about the hearing assessment. If necessary, do some role playing with your child about what will happen there. Have your child wear headphones and take turns to pretend to be a tester.
- After the assessment, collect a copy of the audiogram report before you leave. Bring the report with you to the Admissions & Review (A&R) appointment at APSN. If the audiologist is not able to provide the audiogram and report to you that day, please have them send it before your A&R appointment date, to:

***Admissions/Support Officer, APSN HQ,  
900 New Upper Changi Road, Singapore 467354***