

## Talking Points for Families When an Infant Does Not Pass a Hearing Screening

1) Families of infants who refer on a hearing screening should be educated about the purpose of the hearing screening, the results of the hearing screening and the type of screening performed.

- ✓ Hearing loss is the #1 birth defect in America. Every baby born in Ohio has a hearing screening before discharge. The purpose of the hearing screening is to determine whether specialized hearing testing is needed.
- ✓ The results of the hearing screening indicate ..... which ear(s) referred
- ✓ The type of screening performed is called ..... OAE, ABR, Both

2) Families should understand the importance of scheduling (preferably before discharge) and keeping a follow-up hearing evaluation for their newborn.

- ✓ It is best to test a sleeping infant so the sooner a hearing evaluation occurs, the better. Schedule the evaluation for 2 – 3 weeks after discharge is best.

3) Families should be informed that their baby's doctor will receive a copy of the hearing screening results.

- ✓ Verify the name of the primary care provider
- ✓ Stress the importance of discussing the screening results with the baby's doctor at the first appointment

4) Explain that you will help schedule an appointment for follow-up testing

- ✓ Refer to the Pediatric Audiology Directory

5) Be prepared to answer possible questions such as:

- Why didn't my baby pass the hearing screening?  
*There can be simple reasons for not passing a hearing screening, but your baby needs specialized testing by a pediatric audiologist to know why. A pediatric audiologist is trained to evaluate the hearing of babies and children.*
- Why does my baby need a hearing evaluation?  
*Your baby may or may not have a hearing loss, but the only way to be certain is by scheduling an appointment so your baby receives further testing.*
- Why is it important to have the hearing test as soon as possible?  
*Babies begin to learn speech and language very early. If a hearing loss is not identified early, babies will miss a very critical time in life when these skills are learned.*
- What will happen if my baby doesn't pass the hearing test?  
*The audiologist will determine what to do next. Your baby might need more testing or be evaluated by an ear, nose and throat physician.*
- What happens if my baby has hearing loss?  
*There are many supports in place for you and your baby. One of these is called the Regional Infant Hearing Program. If a hearing loss is identified, someone from this program will contact you to discuss specialized services for babies with hearing loss that are offered at no charge to the family. Remember that finding out about hearing loss as early as possible will help make sure that your baby has the best chance to develop age-appropriate speech and language skills.*

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### DO NOT SAY.....

- Your baby failed.
- The baby has hearing loss.
- There probably isn't anything wrong.
- Don't worry; a lot of babies don't pass.
- The baby probably doesn't need follow-up testing.
- The baby was just too fussy.
- The equipment probably wasn't working right.
- It's probably just fluid in the ears.