



# Auditory-Verbal Therapy

Patient and Family Education

This teaching sheet contains general information. Please talk with your child's doctor or pediatric audiologist to get more specific information. Call **813-262-1330** to schedule an appointment.

## What is auditory-verbal therapy?

- Auditory-verbal therapy teaches children with hearing loss to use the hearing they have to listen and to understand speech in order to learn to talk. Lip reading and sign language are not used.
  - Auditory means to listen and verbal means to speak
- This therapy helps to teach your child:
  - To use their hearing aids or cochlear implant to listen to their own voice, the voices of other individuals, and the sounds around him/her
  - How to understand spoken language
  - To follow the natural pattern that children learn for listening, language, and speech

## What are the goals of auditory-verbal therapy?

The goals of this therapy are for your child to:

- Learn speech by listening rather than watching
- Be in a regular education classroom

## Who provides auditory-verbal therapy?

An auditory-verbal therapist has special training and can be a:

- Speech language pathologist (a person who works with children with speech and language problems)
- An audiologist (works with children with hearing loss)
- A teacher of the deaf or hard of hearing

## How can I help with my child's therapy?

You have a very important role. Your active involvement with your child's therapy is vital in order for your child to do their best. You will spend about 1 hour each day working on your child's goals and therapy at home. You will:

- Come to each therapy session and receive training
- Learn ways to help listening and language development at home
- Learn ways to make therapy a part of your daily routine

## How much therapy does my child need?

Therapy usually begins as soon as your child is fit with hearing aids. Sessions are usually about 1 hour each week. Every child progresses at his/her own rate. Things that affect progress include:

- Your child's age when his/her hearing loss was found
- The cause and amount of hearing loss
- How well the hearing aid(s) or cochlear implant(s) work for your child

To help your child succeed, he/she must go to therapy every week and practice listening every day. Sessions usually continue until your child can function on their own in a regular hearing classroom.

## How can I help my child's speech and language at home?

- Make sure your child wears their hearing aid(s) or cochlear implant(s) each day. Keep them in good working order by attending regular follow-up appointments with your child's audiologist.
- Reduce background noise when you talk with your child. Turn off the TV or radio during playtime so he/she can hear you more clearly.
- Call attention to sounds you hear. Point to your ear and say, "Listen! I hear a doggie. It goes woof-woof." Have your child listen as you then go and find what is making the sound.
- When talking, stay within a range of 6 inches to 3 feet (less than a yardstick distance) from your child so that your child can hear your voice clearly.
- Speak clearly to your child using short, simple sentences.

- Use a melodic tone of voice and a normal level of loudness when speaking to your child.
- Talk about everyday activities as you go about your day.
- Repeat key words as you speak to give your child a chance to listen to them.
- Read stories and sing songs together.
- Make a book for your child with pictures of the special people, places, and things in his/her life. Talk about the book together.

**What if my child does not improve with therapy?**

If your child does not progress as expected, it may be related to:

- Your child’s hearing aid(s) or cochlear implant(s). The hearing aid or cochlear implant should work well, fit well, and be worn all day, every day to ensure that your child receives the maximum amount of benefit.
- Ear infections. Be sure to call your child’s doctor if you think your child has an ear infection.
- You and your family’s level of involvement in your child’s therapy. The more you and your family incorporate listening activities at home, the more opportunities your child will be given to learn to speak.

Not all children can learn to listen and talk without lip reading or using sign language. The auditory-verbal therapist will test your child about every 6 months to make sure that they are making the appropriate progress.

If your child does not seem to make progress after 6 months of therapy, full-time family involvement integrating listening activities at home, and full-time hearing aid or cochlear implant use, your child may need to use another form of communication besides speaking.

- Some parents may choose to incorporate visual systems using the eyes to help their children communicate better. These may include lip reading, cued speech, and/or sign language.