

Hearing Screening

Purpose

Screening provides an essential way to identify students who may have educational difficulties due to a hearing loss. Early identification will help to ensure that these students receive appropriate medical follow-up, intervention, and educational services and supports.

The Screening Process

Schools should screen the hearing of children in these recommended target groups:

- Students in nursery, kindergarten and grade 1
- Students referred because of parental or teacher suspicions of hearing loss
- Students who are new to the school division/district, especially newcomers to Canada
- Students with known hearing problems and those who failed the screening in the previous year
- Students who receive additional supports from Resource, and/or Speech and Language services

The hearing screening procedure should take a few minutes per child. An audiologist, audiometrist, rehabilitation assistant, trained volunteer or school division staff member (e.g. speech/language pathologist, educational assistant) administers the short screening test using an audiometer. The audiometer produces different pitches (frequencies) of sound at varying loudness levels which are transmitted through headphones to each ear.

Children indicate when they hear the sounds by raising their hand or by clapping their hands. Children who respond to all the sounds in both ears receive a 'pass'. Those who do not should be screened a second time. If a child again does not hear all the sounds, he/she should be referred to an audiologist for a complete hearing assessment. At that time, it will be determined if the child:

- has normal hearing but failed the screening for other reasons (e.g. distractions, lack of understanding of the process)
- needs medical intervention (e.g. for an ear infection, other medical issues)
- has a hearing loss (which may be temporary or permanent)

Equipment

School divisions are responsible for purchasing their own portable audiometers to use for hearing screening. Information regarding recommended audiometers, repairs and calibration of units are available from the Provincial Audiology Technician in Brandon. The technician can be contacted at 1-204-571-5520.