

Tips and Techniques to Improve Screening Outcomes

Perfecting your screening will lower referral rates, decrease screening time, decrease screener frustration, and improve the overall quality of your newborn hearing screening program.



The Environment:

Screening will be faster and more effective if you test in a quiet and controlled environment. Care should be taken to select an environment that minimizes noise and confusion in the screening area.

- Turn off TV, radio
- Utilize low traffic areas, partitions or curtains
- Move away from phones, noisy equipment and conversations
- Ask family members to observe quietly or leave the room



The Baby:

Ensure babies are well prepped and in their best behavioral state for screening.

- Well fed
- Swaddled
- Quiet, preferably sleeping
- Low myogenic activity (limited muscle movement)
- Know if pacifiers are/are not permitted
- Utilize note cards on the isolette requesting that the non-passing ear be kept “up” in preparation for rescreening
- If screening cannot be completed within 20 minutes, stop testing and try again at a later time when the baby is well fed and asleep.



OAE Screening Tips:

Inspect and massage the ear canal to reduce debris. Choose the probe tip size carefully. Fit tip properly on probe and place snugly in baby’s ear canal. Pull ear back to help open the canal when inserting the tip. Do not hold the probe while screening. Wait for baby to settle down before starting the screen. If baby does not pass, remove probe and check both probe and canal for debris, massage canal, change probe tip and retry.



AABR Screening Tips:

Clean the electrode sites. Do not touch the surface of the electrodes. Better electrode contact leads to better impedance. The lower the electrode impedance, the quicker and more accurate the screening. Place earphones with a front to back rolling motion, gently press earphones to gain a tight seal. Myogenic noise is created by muscle contractions as the baby moves. This muscle noise interferes with the screening response and slows down or stops the screening. If the baby is sucking vigorously on a pacifier, remove it. Take time to soothe and calm the baby before beginning the test. If the baby does not pass, check placement and seal of earphones, placement of electrodes, check electrical noise from other equipment or outlets, and make sure baby is asleep before retrying.