



Harmonize for Speech, Hearing and Language
Clinic

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Hearing Aid Information Package

Dear Parents and Guardians:

This package is created specifically for your current situation and is designed to help you navigate the process of acquiring hearing aids for your child and accessing community supports.

This package is best used as a place to start learning about hearing aids. It contains information on: funding for, care of and general information on hearing aids; counseling and support options; and next steps for helping your child through school.

Your audiologist is aware of all the factors involved in hearing aid care and can further your knowledge of hearing aid information beyond what this package can provide. Your audiologist will also play a key supporting role for you and your child as you continue to grow and learn.

I encourage you to use all the resources you have available, to speak to your health care providers and to advocate for your child. There is a whole world of supportive communities out there just waiting to be discovered by you and your child.

Sincerely,

Emily Kay

Communicative Disorders Assistant Student

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Funding Resources

Funding hearing aids for your child can be a daunting task. The cost of hearing aids and hearing technologies is often more than previously imagined. To aid you in beginning your purchase of hearing aid technologies here are a few questions and a variety of websites below.

Remember, it is always important to ask your local health care provider for further information on funding as they may have local resources not mentioned in the list below.

The **Ministry of Children and Youth Services of Ontario** offers financial aid under a variety of titles. Those found in the right hand corner of the website relating specifically to hearing are:

- The Assistive Devices Program (ADP) helps to fund long term physical disabilities, including **hearing impairments**. ADP will fund a fixed amount towards the cost of hearing aids and **up to 75%** on many other devices. Eligibility and accessibility are found on the website below.
- The Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities will pay between **\$25 to \$440 per month** towards costs of hearing aids and other devices. The website below directs you on how to apply.
- The Special Services at Home Program helps families pay for **outside support** in caring for a child with a developmental or physical disability.
<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/topics/financialhelp/index.aspx>

The AG Bell Foundation offers **funding support** and a chance for parents to reach out to other parents for support. The site contains parent **blogs**, tips for daily challenges, **success stories** and **supportive material** for **self-counseling**. This company is rooted in America and has no local chapters in Canada, but has **an online community** offering further support.
<http://www.agbell.org/Default.aspx>

The VOICE for hearing impaired children foundation is a charitable program that “helps kids hear, listen and speak for life” (VOICE, 2016). The website below offers information for parents regarding eligibility for **government funding**, opportunities for funding outside the government, **scholarship opportunities**, **personal support workers** programs and a chance for **peer-peer interaction** at summer camp.

<http://www.voicefordeafkids.com/>

The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association offers a variety of **scholarship opportunities** designed specifically for students with a hearing impairment.

<http://www.chha.ca/chha/>

The President’s Choice Children’s Charity offers **financial aid** for children with special needs.

http://www.presidentschoice.ca/en_CA/community/pccc.html

The Jennifer Ashleigh Children’s Charity “assists seriously ill children and their families” offering **funding** for a wide range of impairments.

<http://jenash.org/>

Questions to consider:

- Δ How much funding will I get from this source?
- Δ Will the funding come directly to me or go through my insurance?
- Δ How long will it take for the money to come through?
- Δ What are the requirements/ eligibility criteria for funding?
- Δ Can I get funding for more than one source?
- Δ What documents and other requirements do I have to fill?

Informational Websites

Not sure you've understood everything your healthcare provider said? Not certain that the terms they used are English? Just want more information on hearing aids or hearing impairments?

Listed below are several websites that provide answers to frequently asked questions, information on different programs in Ontario and information on a variety of other subjects.

The Ontario Infant Hearing Program is run by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services of Ontario. This program screens babies for hearing loss shortly after birth. On the website below information is provided regarding the **types of screeners administered, what to expect** during the screenings, **where** the screeners can be administered and the **support** the audiologist is to provided after screening.

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/topics/earlychildhood/hearing/index.aspx>

The Ontario Early Years Program is a charitable, **not for profit** organization that provides excellent resources for parents and children, provides children with the opportunity **“to participate in play and inquiry based programs and support all parents and caregivers in their roles.”** There are a **variety of locations** around Ontario that provide these daily activities. The **local Barrie chapter** currently shares space with a local SLP and the Infant Hearing Program to provide free screenings to families.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/FamilyPrograms.html>

<http://www.simcoecomunityservices.ca/home>

The Ontario Association for Children with Communication Disorders focuses on children being able to access a continuum of speech and language services to support their **participation in their home and community**. It provides **family resources** and **tips for communication** as well as giving children the opportunity to attend **summer camps**.

<http://www.oafccd.com/>

The College of Audiologists and Speech Language Pathologists of Ontario (CASLPO) is designed to protect the public and as such provides information on how they protect those using services provided by **audiologists and speech language pathologists**. They also offers **links** to many informative websites and provide a list of common **acronyms** used in audiology and speech language pathology.

<http://www.caslpo.com/>

The Ontario Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists (OSLA) offers an extensive list of a **variety of hearing services** including information, **grants** and **school programs** in Ontario.

https://www.osla.on.ca/en/home?mid=ctl00_MainMenu_ctl00_TheMenu-menuItem001

The Thames Valley District School Board has an informative website and provides a **terminal to other informative websites**.

<http://www.tvdsb.ca/programs.cfm?subpage=3109>

The Canadian Academy of Audiology provides information on **hearing losses** and the world of **hearing aids**. It also provides a **terminal** to other informative websites.

<https://canadianaudiology.ca/>

The Better Hearing Institute provides information on **understanding hearing loss in children** and ways to work with children in the **school setting**. It also includes links to multiple **online resources** and a **guide to early childhood** milestones.

<http://www.betterhearing.org/>

Questions to consider:

Δ Want to know more about everything your health care provider just said?

Δ Want to know more about hearing impairments?

Δ Want to know more about your child's hearing impairment?

Δ Want to know more about hearing aids?

Δ Want to learn more about audiologists and speech language pathologists?

Δ Just plain curious about hearing and the ear?

Hearing Aid Care

Your audiologist probably told you exactly how to take care of the hearing aid and you've been in again to make sure you got all the information but you still can't remember what they said to do.

This is natural and perfectly rational response to all the information you've received in the last few days. In fact, studies have proven that between 40% to 80% of information that is given out verbally in clinical appointments is forgotten afterwards (Kessels, 2003).

The websites below are from hearing aid manufacturers and contain information regarding maintenance and care of their specific hearing aids.

Widex is a hearing aid manufacturing company out of Denmark with headquarters in Burlington, Ontario. The Widex website provides **online videos** demonstrating maintenance for hearing aids as well as information on hearing aid technologies. Furthermore the website contains **any easy access contact page** for remaining questions.

<http://www.widex.ca/en-ca/support/maintenance>

Oticon is a hearing aid manufacturing company out of Denmark with headquarters in Mississauga. The Oticon website contains information on **hearing loss in children, tips** to help children adjust and **online videos** demonstrating maintenance for hearing aids.

<http://www.oticon.ca/>

Phoenix is a hearing aid manufacturing company out of Australia. Their **online shopping** provides a variety of technologies for hearing aids and **around the home devices** designed to help individuals hear more.

<http://www.phoenixhearing.com.au/>

Phonak is a hearing aid manufacturing company out of Switzerland. They are a **well rounded** company with solid information on their products, **types of hearing aids** available, pediatrics and **troubleshooting** any problems that occur.

<http://www.phonak.com>

Questions to consider:

- Δ How do I care for my child's hearing aid?
- Δ Where can I buy a new hearing aid?
- Δ Do all hearing aids do the same thing?
- Δ Are some hearing aids or brands of hearing aids better than others?
- Δ Where can I find more information about hearing aids in general?

Counselling and Support Groups

Do you feel overwhelmed? Confused, depressed, disoriented or angry about what is happening to you and your child? These are all natural reactions. Sometimes it helps to talk to someone who has already gone through what you are currently going through, exchange ideas with other parents going through the same challenges or simply meet new people.

The websites below, ranging from support groups to parents meeting parents to one on one counseling services are designed to do just that.

The Deaf Access Simcoe Muskoka organization serves the “culturally deaf, oral deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people” in the Simcoe Muskoka area. They offer **parent-child support** services and bring awareness of **other community counseling** services; **parent -child playgroups**; **peer-peer recreational sessions** and a **family communication program**.

<http://www.deafaccess.ca/index.html>

The AG Bell Foundation offers funding and a chance for **parents to reach out to other parents** for support. The site contains **parent blogs**, **tips for daily challenges**, **success stories** and **supportive material for self-counseling**. This company is rooted in America and has no local chapters in Canada, but has an **online community** offering further support.

<http://www.agbell.org/Default.aspx>

The Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) offers a variety of **educational programs** including a **family communication program**. CHS also offers a wide range of **free counseling services**. Not all services may be available in every city.

<http://www.chs.ca/>

The Ontario Hands and Voices Association offers **parent support groups** for families whose children have been diagnosed with a hearing impairment to receive the necessary support.

www.ontariohandsandvoices.com

Questions to consider:

- Δ Am I feeling overwhelmed?
- Δ Am I feeling angry, depressed, anxious, guilty and confused?
- Δ Is there anyone I can talk to?
- Δ Has anyone already gone through all this?
- Δ Do I or my child experience a large amount of confusion?
- Δ How can I help my child in the next stages of their journey?

Next Steps: Find an audiologist or speech-language pathologist near you!

So where do you go now? You're child has a hearing impairment, you've received some funding but what about the future? One beneficial area to begin considering is the need for further information and help regarding hearing aids- your child will eventually grow out of their new pair. You may also need to consider potential speech therapy for your child.

The websites below provide an online search engine for audiologist and speech language pathologists in your location.

College of Speech Language Pathologists and Audiologists of Ontario

<http://www.caslpo.com/>

• The Ontario Association of Speech Language Pathologists.

<https://www.osla.on.ca/en/childirectory>

• The Speech-Language and Audiologist Association of Canada

<http://sac-oac.ca/public/find-professional>

• The AG Bell Foundation

<http://www.agbell.org/Default.aspx>

Staying Current:

Δ One of the easiest ways to stay current is to stay involved.

Δ Participating in the community allows you access to information you might not have otherwise known.

Δ Many organizations are constantly searching for new members. Here are some to consider:

<http://www.deafaccess.ca/index.html>

<http://www.chs.ca/>

<https://www.osla.on.ca/>

<http://sac-oac.ca/>

<http://www.caslpo.com>

Next Steps: School Programs

Your child has hearing aids, is wearing them and is progressing along nicely- but wait, is that school around the corner? Doubtless every parent has concerns for their child as they approach or continue the tumultuous process of school, perhaps more so when your child has a hearing impairment.

The websites below provide a variety of ways to help the parent, the classroom educator, the student and the student's peers navigate the dangerous hallways of school.

The Canadian Hearing Society has **an informational guide** to helping hearing impaired children succeed in the classroom and offers free webinars for educators in all of Canada. CHS also offers Language Foundations Workshops to **help teachers and parents**.

<http://www.chs.ca/classroom-accessibility-guide>

<https://www.chs.ca/webinar>

The Ontario Preschool Speech and Language Program is run by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services of Ontario. This program allows the **parent to self-refer** the child, **no healthcare practitioner necessary**. The website below details the locations and contact information of this program for all of Ontario.

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/topics/earlychildhood/speechlanguage/locations.aspx>

<http://www.oafccd.com/>

The British Columbia Ministry of Education has **a resource guide** for teaching hard of hearing and deaf students **available online**. It includes communication tips, communication needs of learning, assignment guides and information on **troubleshooting FM systems**.

<https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/hearimpair/toc.htm>

The Ontario Association for Children with Communication Disorders focuses on children being able to access a continuum of speech and language services to support their participation in their home and community. It provides **family resources** and **tips for communication** in the community and at school.

<http://www.oafccd.com/>