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Hearing screenings to become available to all Australian newborns

Australian Hearing welcomes the Prime Minister's plan to have every newborn tested for hearing impairment.

The National Acoustic Laboratories (NAL), the research division of Australian Hearing, has been conducting extensive research for more than three years, into the benefits of early intervention and hearing loss. The research has showed that children born with hearing loss can develop the same language skills as others if diagnosed early and intervention programs are implemented.

Professor Harvey Dillon, Director of Research at NAL said the research is showing that it is critical that children receive the type of help that is best for them by the time they reach their first birthday and that the only way to be sure that happens is if their hearing loss is detected at birth.

"It is particularly important that children have access to sound during their first year or two of life," Professor Dillon said.

"We believe that this early exposure to sound enables their brains to develop the neural connections that will help them easily understand speech for the rest of their life."

"Screening is the perfect start. It must rapidly be followed by diagnosis and then intervention if it is to achieve anything. Children in Australia with hearing loss are particularly lucky in this regard because Australian Hearing provides high quality intervention services to all children with hearing loss across Australia," Professor Dillon said.

Australian Hearing, a Federal Government Agency, provides hearing services to all children under the age of 21. Infants are seen at their local Australian Hearing centre when their hearing aid fitting has been well established by their specialist.

For more information about Australian Hearing, contact your nearest centre on 131 797 or visit www.hearing.com.au. Australian Hearing provides services at 99 permanent centres and more than 260 visiting sites across Australia.

Ends#

Visit www.hearing.com.au for eligibility criteria.

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