

What can I do to protect my child's hearing?

We've all seen young children spontaneously cover their ears as a fire engine drives by with its sirens blaring. And it seems that kids know what's good for them! The damaging effect of noise exposure on our hearing is cumulative, so it's important to protect hearing from an early age. Researchers can't say for sure whether younger ears are more vulnerable to loud sound, but animal studies suggest that noise damage experienced at an early age results in relatively poorer hearing in later life¹ so it makes sense to do everything we can to protect our children's hearing.

Model healthy hearing behaviours

Children learn from their parents, so it's important to model the hearing behaviours we want to encourage in our kids. Show your kids that you value your hearing and talk about how you can make choices that limit your exposure. Set boundaries around your own headphone listening and wear earmuffs when you're mowing the lawn.

Reduce your child's sound exposure

It's never too early to set up good hearing habits. Monitor your child's participation in loud sporting events, music concerts and other activities where there are high sound levels, and help them to understand their exposure. If your child is exposed to loud music at school discos or dance lessons, show them how the sound gets softer when they move away from the speakers and encourage them to pick a spot where their ears feel comfortable. If you are concerned about the sound level, [use your phone to take a measurement](#) and talk to the organisers.

Set limits on your child's headphone listening

It's important to monitor the time your child spends listening to headphones, and help them to make healthy hearing choices. If they're listening in noisy environments or on long trips, it can be tempting to turn up the volume, so select headphones that are well-fitted and provide a good seal, or opt for a pair that offers noise cancellation, which will make it easier to listen at lower volumes.

You can also [set a volume limit on your child's phone](#):

- check for 'volume limit' under Settings;
- download an app to help you set a limit on device volume and/or listening time, or;
- use Apple's Health app to [monitor your child's listening levels](https://support.apple.com/en-au/guide/iphone/iph1df080ecc/ios). (<https://support.apple.com/en-au/guide/iphone/iph1df080ecc/ios>)

Volume-limited headphones are another option to consider. Wirecutter has done the research for you and recommends these brands:

- [Puro BT200](https://purosound.com/products/bt2200-volume-limited-kids-bluetooth-headphones?source=pepperjam&publisherId=132845&clickId=3141953985) (<https://purosound.com/products/bt2200-volume-limited-kids-bluetooth-headphones?source=pepperjam&publisherId=132845&clickId=3141953985>)
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Use hearing protectors

If you're taking young children to a fireworks display or music concert, invest in some earmuffs to protect their hearing. Try these suppliers:

- [Alpine Muffy](https://www.alpinehearingprotection.com/earplugs/muffy/): (<https://www.alpinehearingprotection.com/earplugs/muffy/>) This adjustable earmuff fits children from around 2 years of age. It has a soft headband for comfort and can be folded so it's easy transport.

- **Ems for Kids:** (<https://www.earmuffsforkids.com.au/>) Ems for Kids has earmuffs for babies aged 0-18 months and kids aged up mid-teens. The baby earmuff has an adjustable velcro headband, while the model for older kids has an adjustable headband that allows the earmuffs to grow with the child.

If you have concerns about your child's hearing, talk to one of our audiologists today.



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1. Kujawa, S. G., & Liberman, M. C. (2006). Acceleration of age-related hearing loss by early noise exposure: evidence of a misspent youth. *Journal of Neuroscience*, 26(7), 2115-2123.

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