



Dr. Jace Wolfe – Tips For Keeping a Child’s Hearing Aids On

Dr. Teresa Caraway: As you fit babies with hearing aids, one of the things that babies like to do is, about nine or ten months of age, they are always pulling their hearing aids out and pulling them off. I always tell parents, "We're gonna change your middle name to perseverance to keep those hearing aids on because eyes open, ears on." But what suggestions do you have for parents and for professionals regarding retention of hearing aids, keeping those hearing aids on? Are there different tools or resources that could be used?

Dr. Jace Wolfe: That's a great question. There are several types of retention options. You can use double-sided tape or wig tape, toupee tape to keep the hearing aids on. If it's simply a matter that the ear's just not large enough to accommodate the hearing aid, that can be really effective. There are loops that can be attached to the hearing aid or cords that can be clipped on the clothes to keep them from being lost.

What happens often times is, as children reach the six-to-12-month age range, they start to explore their own body. If there's something different on their ear, they want to pull that out and what's the first thing they want to do? They want to put it in their mouth. That's exactly right. You can use aviator caps or bonnets or hearing huggies to place over the head and over the hearing aids, and you can get through that difficult time because the child can't get access to his or her ears to pull off the hearing aids.

Now, one thing that's really critical, it's really normal for children at that age to try to pull the hearing aids off and put it in their mouth. If the child seems overly agitated, then we might need to reevaluate the child's hearing or hearing aids or cochlear implant to make sure that they're not either underset or overset. I've seen both situations, where a hearing aid is overset, and the child might feel like it's uncomfortable, or if it's underset, they're not getting the stimulation that they need.

Dr. Teresa Caraway: Okay.

Dr. Jace Wolfe: Yeah, and we need to turn it up to get better access to the brain. So, the audiologist and the family really need to work together to evaluate what is the reason that the child maybe is pulling the

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hearing aids out or they're not staying on the ears and then determine the solution that's necessary to keep the hearing aids on.

Dr. Teresa Caraway: Absolutely. It sounds like a lot of pediatric audiology and listening and spoken language specialists and parents working together is really becoming a detective.

Dr. Jace Wolfe: That's exactly right.

Dr. Teresa Caraway: Look at all the variables and to look at why is this child perhaps pulling their hearing aids out more often, and then also answer that question and move into what are some retention options.

Dr. Jace Wolfe: That's exactly right. But I should go full-circle back around to what you said. When hearing aids or cochlear implants are fitted appropriately, babies want to wear their hearing aids.

Dr. Teresa Caraway: Yeah, they do.

Dr. Jace Wolfe: They'll explore their body, and that's where it becomes an issue of just perseverance. For every hour, for every minute even that a family can keep hearing aids on, that is going to improve the outcome that the child's going have later in life. They'll never regret any time that they put it back on or any second that they spent with that.

Dr. Teresa Caraway: Something that a family can really do to help their child get smart and do well in school is wear their hearing aids all waking hours.

Dr. Jace Wolfe: That's right. They have to have access to the auditory areas of the brain.

Dr. Teresa Caraway: Absolutely.