For more information

If you have any questions about the hearing screening program, or if you are anxious about your baby’s screening results at any stage, further information and advice is available from:

Children’s Audiology Service
- the Universal Neonatal Hearing Screening Program
Monday to Friday
Telephone: 8303 1585

Or you can view the Universal Neonatal Hearing Screening Program web page at: www.cafhs.sa.gov.au
Why does my baby need a diagnostic assessment?
If your baby does not show a pass result in both ears on either the first or second newborn hearing screen, a diagnostic assessment will be arranged. There may be a number of reasons why your baby’s hearing screening was not able to rule out a hearing loss.

It could be that:
> Your baby was unsettled during the hearing screens.
> There was fluid or a temporary blockage in your baby’s ear after the birth.
> Your baby may have some degree of hearing loss.

Some babies who are at increased risk for permanent hearing loss will not have a hearing screen and are instead recommended to complete a full diagnostic hearing assessment. Hospital and Child and Family Health Service staff are trained to recognise when a child requires a hearing screen and when they require a full assessment. If you are not sure if your baby requires a hearing screen or a full hearing assessment, talk to your hospital or CaFHS support staff.

Picking up hearing loss at an early age provides the best opportunity to assist your child’s speech and language development and future learning.

As the diagnostic assessment includes more tests than in the initial screen you should be prepared to set aside the morning or afternoon, depending on when your appointment has been scheduled.

How is the diagnostic assessment done?
The diagnostic test is called the Auditory Brainstem Response (ABR) test. Sensors will be placed on your baby’s head and sounds will be played through headphones to your baby. Your baby’s responses to the sounds are recorded electronically and will determine the softest levels that your baby can hear.

What will happen after the tests?
The audiologist will be able to inform you of the results and explain what the results mean, usually on the same day. If your baby is found to have a hearing loss, you will be referred to the appropriate specialist and intervention services.

Each year around 50 babies in South Australian are diagnosed with a permanent hearing loss. If your baby is diagnosed with a hearing loss, the audiologist will assist your baby in accessing the services and support that you may need.

If your baby is found to have normal hearing but at a later stage you become concerned about your child’s hearing, speech or language development, please contact your G.P. to arrange to have your child’s hearing tested again. Hearing can be tested at any age.

What will happen at the assessment?
The aim of the diagnostic assessment is to obtain a more complete picture of your baby’s hearing.

The evaluation will include a number of tests. Each test will check a different part of your baby’s hearing system. These will give detailed information about how your baby hears.

An audiologist, who is a specialist in hearing testing, will carry out the tests. None of the tests hurt your baby. As there will be a lot of information given about your baby’s hearing, we encourage both parents to be present at the assessment.

How do I prepare my baby for the assessment?
Your baby needs to be asleep for the diagnostic assessment. It is helpful if feeding and sleep can be delayed on the day until you are at the appointment.

Arrive a little early to give yourself time to feed and settle your baby to sleep.

If you have other children at home, please arrange to have someone mind them, so that you can stay with your baby.