



Facts about the Survey

A recent survey of new and expectant mothers shows a severe lack of awareness about the opportunities for children with hearing loss to learn to listen and talk. This is a concern, given that most babies learn language by hearing it long before they can talk.

In addition, early diagnosis of hearing loss is critical to a child's successful speech and language development. The survey points to the need for significant parent education – and the need for healthcare professionals to actively discuss the issue with them.

Survey highlights include:

Hearing Loss is not “Top of Mind”

- The majority of new and expectant moms (55 percent) are not concerned about the possibility of their child experiencing hearing loss – yet it is the **No. 1 birth defect** in America.
- When it comes to their baby's health, **only 1 percent** of mothers ranked hearing loss as their **top concern** – even though hearing loss is more common than conditions such as Down syndrome.

Most Moms Unclear About Screening and Intervention Options

- More than half (58 percent) of new and expectant mothers who knew about newborn health screenings were unaware that testing for hearing loss is typically part of those screenings.
- One-third (33 percent) of the survey respondents admitted they didn't know that **early intervention is critical** for addressing childhood hearing loss. Yet experts recommend beginning family-centered early intervention programs before a baby is 6 months old to take advantage of the critical time window for learning language.
- Only **2 percent** of new and expectant mothers volunteered cochlear implant surgery and only **5 percent** suggested hearing aids as options for children with hearing loss.
- Yet almost all moms (98 percent) said they **would be inclined to explore spoken language** if their child experienced hearing loss.



Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

3417 Volta Place, NW | Washington, DC 20007

Tel 202.337.5220 | TTY 202.337.5221

www.agbell.org



In April and May 2006, the Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (AG Bell) worked with the research firm StrategyOne to conduct a 15-minute telephone survey of 816 expectant and new mothers nationwide. Half of those surveyed (400) were expectant mothers, and 416 were mothers with a child age 1 or younger. The survey included both first-time mothers and those who have other children. The margin of error for the sample size was +/-3.4 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence.



Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

3417 Volta Place, NW | Washington, DC 20007

Tel 202.337.5220 | TTY 202.337.5221

www.agbell.org