



## Mary Woolley approach to assist with keeping Hearing Aids on

- When Parents Bring the H/As to the child, they must always look pleasant (no scowls, no matter how frustrated they felt.)
- Kiss each H/A and tell their child that they may have a turn wearing the H/As, but first it is mommy's turn. Then the mom drapes the H/As over her own ears and puts on an expression of delight. Exclaiming about the joys of being able to hear so many interesting sounds, and saying "Ahhh, that's better."
- Next, it is the child's turn. Mom makes the child comfortable (perhaps with the child's head in her lap) gives her something nice to hold in each hand, and then as gently as possible she puts in the H/As. Parents report that at first it is quite awkward and time consuming to insert the H/As, but with practice they quickly get better at it.
- When the aids are first in and turned on, you need to speak quietly and keep the child entertained. As soon as the child appears to be ready to snatch the H/As out of her ears you tap her watch and says, "Oh, look at that, your turn is over." (Even if it has only been a few minutes.) The mom then removes the H/As and tries the entire process again in just a few minutes. If other family members are present, they may also take a turn.
- I remind parents that when the child tries to take out the aids it doesn't necessarily mean she doesn't like them. She may just want to look at, hold, and explore the thing that is in her ear. Also, as wear time increases, the child's ear canal may feel itchy, hot or the area behind her ear may feel sore. In this case, the parent needs to be respectful of the child's need to remove the aid. Then help cool down or scratch the canal a little, or just give a good rub to the whole ear. Then replace the aids.
- Explain to parents that although this seems like a tedious, time consuming approach, it will pay off in the long run. With each episode the goal is to increase the wear time by a few more minutes.

Of course, real life tells us that the parent won't always get to the child in time to remove the aids themselves. So when the child removes the aids herself, the parent needs to still smile, put out her hand for the aids, perhaps put the aids back together again, wait a few minutes, and begin the wear time routine again.

Many parents say that the audiologist told them to be very stern and strict with the child, even slapping hands if necessary to keep the aids in for all waking hours. This is not the approach that makes anyone want to wear a hearing aid. The child will feel sad, picked on, angry, and resentful.

Mary tells us

"I had a father once who used this strong arm approach to H/A wear time with his tiny, beautiful, blonde daughter and it didn't work. She slapped him back and refused the aids. No matter how mean he got, he never won. I didn't know if he could ever get forgiveness from his little girl, or achieve her acceptance of her aids. He finally gave in to me though, and tried the Mary approach and although it took an entire month of constant effort, it eventually worked.

That was one dad that I wanted very badly to beat up until he screamed for mercy, and then whack him one more time. It would have been so much nicer for him, his daughter, and everyone else involved, if he'd just been sweet and gentle from the beginning.”