



What is the Role of the Pediatric Audiologist?

Pat Roush, AuD.: So one of the nice things about being a pediatric audiologist, I think, is that it's a nice blend of technical expertise and interpersonal skills. And I think a good pediatric audiologist has to both have that technical knowledge of all the components that are necessary to provide services to a baby with hearing loss, as well as the ability to relate to families in a way that's meaningful for them.

I think that's what I love about being a pediatric audiologist, is that I am required to think quickly on my feet, all day long. I view the role of the pediatric audiologist as having the skill to do all the components that's necessary – that are necessary - to bring a baby from newborn hearing screening, through the whole spectrum of their childhood years.

That begins, of course, with a newborn screening, making sure that that's done in an appropriate way. And then followed by the appropriate diagnostic auditory brain stem test, to sort out whether they have a hearing loss. And if so is it in both ears? What type of hearing loss it is...and then ultimately to decide what type of technology they need.

And that involves doing...making decisions about the degree of their hearing loss, the type of their hearing loss and so forth. From there, we'd like to see the baby get fit with hearing aids as early as possible. And today, it's possible to fit a baby with hearing aids by the time they're just a few weeks of age.

So, the pediatric audiologist really has to have skills in a wide variety of areas: From doing the diagnostic testing necessary for ABR. What are the appropriate evidence-based procedures for fitting a hearing aid? And then ultimately, putting that child in a sound booth and having them perform the behavioral audiologic procedures to further understand the nature and degree of their hearing loss.