

# Changes to Australian Hearing's recall appointment management for children



*Information for families*

## **Background:**

For the past 5 years Australian Hearing has been using a "Pre-booked Appointment" (PBA) system to arrange annual review appointments for children who wear hearing aids. In this system families who attend for routine review are able to arrange their child's next review appointment up to 12 months ahead, before leaving the hearing centre.

This system was introduced after parent feedback indicated that families were finding it difficult to obtain appointment times that met their needs. Australian Hearing agreed to trial the new appointment system and to review whether or not it improved access for families. This review was undertaken in late 2009.

The review indicated that the PBA system had not improved access to appointments for families. Data from our survey of hearing aid use and service satisfaction conducted with parents of aided children in 2008 indicated that 17% of families were dissatisfied with timeliness of appointments, compared with 10% of families surveyed in 2000.

We hoped that the introduction of the PBA system would mean that more families were able to keep their scheduled appointments; however we observed an increase in the rate of families failing to attend appointments compared to attendance rates prior to the introduction of the PBA.

Approximately 60 -70% of our paediatric hearing centres found an increase in the number of families that failed to attend their scheduled reviews after the PBA was introduced. The increase in unused appointment time with our audiologists also reduced our ability to accommodate appointment preferences for other families.

On the basis of these findings, we have decided to introduce an improved recall system.

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## How will the new system work?

1. Your audiologist will discuss with you the timing of your (child's) next scheduled review and will decide in which month the appointment will occur.
2. This information will be entered onto our data base.
3. We will telephone you approximately 8 to 10 weeks before the month in which your (child's) next appointment is due so that we can arrange an appointment.
4. We will make two attempts to contact you. A reminder letter will be posted if we are unable to contact you.
5. You will receive a reminder call one or two days before the appointment time.

## Some important information:

Australian Hearing aims to offer you an appointment time that suits your preferences, but certain times are popular with many families so we cannot guarantee that you will always get your first preference.

Australian Hearing aims for you to see the same audiologist at each appointment. However this is not always possible if, for example, your audiologist is on leave or working at another hearing centre. You may then choose to see another audiologist, or to arrange your review at a later time when your audiologist is available.

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