



Guide to Getting Hearing Aids

Hearing Aid Funding Scheme (HAFS) for
children in New Zealand



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This guide has been developed by the New Zealand Audiological Society as an information resource for children, young people and their caregivers about the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme available for children in New Zealand, through Disability Support Services.

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Introduction

This guide provides information about how hearing aids may be funded for you, your child or young person, and the process involved.

The Hearing Aid Funding Scheme (HAFS) covers the cost of hearing aids for children and young people up to 21 years old (in full time education), and who are New Zealand residents who ordinarily live in New Zealand.

Funding for a hearing aid for each ear is available no more than three times in any six-year period.

Most children and young people's hearing aids are fitted for free through the public hospital system. Some private audiology clinics also fit hearing aids to children and young people, but there may be additional fees to pay for this service as the funding is only available for the cost of the device and will not cover any service/appointment fees charged at a private practice.

To access this funding, you or your child or young person must have their hearing assessment and hearing aid recommendation undertaken by an audiologist who is a member of the New Zealand Audiological Society (MNZAS).

What to expect from audiology services

Obtaining hearing aid/s for children and young people through the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme involves a structured process to ensure they receive appropriate support. Here is a step-by-step guide of what to expect:

Undergo a Hearing Assessment:

Your audiologist will evaluate you, or your child or young person's hearing and determine if hearing aids are appropriate.

Application for Funding:

If hearing aids are recommended, your audiologist will apply to Enable New Zealand for funding assistance.

Fitting and Trial Period:

Once funding is approved, your audiologist will fit the hearing aids and provide guidance on usage. A trial period allows adjustments to ensure optimal performance.

Maintenance and Support:

Following the trial, regular check-ups are required to monitor your, or your child or young person's hearing and optimize the hearing aid settings and fit. Batteries, maintenance, and repairs for children's hearing aids are provided free of charge by Ko Taku Reo - Deaf Education New Zealand.

Referral to Other Services:

Your audiologist will discuss any other services that may be beneficial for you, or your child or young person to support hearing, learning and communication goals.

Replacement of Hearing Aids:

Funding for replacements is available up to three times within a six-year period, ensuring devices remain effective as you, or your child or young person grows. Replacement hearing aids are only available when the current hearing aids can no longer be repaired or modified to meet changed hearing needs, and a replacement is the only viable option.

Replacement for lost or stolen hearing aids may be covered by your personal/household contents insurance. Where a family holds applicable insurance that covers the loss or damage of a hearing aid, it is generally expected that they will make a claim through their insurer in the first instance. The Hearing Aid Funding Scheme remains available where there is no insurance cover, or where insurance has been exhausted or is not applicable. In situations where insurance is held, funding through the scheme would not typically be the first option. Assistance to cover an insurance excess can be applied for where appropriate if the family requires this support.

Types of Hearing Aids

Hearing aids come in a range of styles to suit different hearing needs. Your audiologist will explain the benefits and things to consider when choosing a hearing aid for you, or your child or young person.

Behind-the-ear (BTE) Hearing Aids

- Sit behind the ear with a sound tube going into the ear
- Can be fitted with a custom earpiece
- Suit most levels of hearing loss
- Are suitable for infants, children and young people

Receiver-in-the-ear (RITE) Hearing Aids

- Sit behind the ear with a wire and speaker going into the ear
- May be prone to damage from moisture or ear wax
- Suit mild to moderately-severe levels of hearing loss
- Are not suitable for infants and younger children

In-the-ear (ITE) Hearing Aids

- Fit completely in the ear
- Are available in a range of sizes and styles
- May be prone to damage from moisture or ear wax
- Are not suitable for infants and younger children

Bone Conduction Hearing Aids

- Sit on the bone behind the ear using vibrations to send sound to the inner ear
- Can be worn on a soft headband, adhesive pad or as a surgically implanted device
- Are suitable for infants, children and young people with certain types of hearing loss.

Other hearing device technology

Remote Microphone (RM) Systems

For children or young people with hearing aids, a personal RM system may be helpful. This is a device that transmits sound to a receiver within a hearing aid and is often used to help deaf and hard of hearing children and young people hear the teacher in a classroom.

The Ministry of Education may be able to fund a personal RM system for school-age children. Disability Support Services (DSS) may also fund personal RM systems for preschoolers.

Cochlear Implants

Given your child or young person's hearing, a cochlear implant may be recommended. Your audiologist can make a referral to the regional cochlear implant programme if indicated, and you may be eligible for funding through [the DSS cochlear implant programme](#) (follow QR code)



Warranty & Repairs

It is normal for hearing aids to need servicing from time to time. They are sensitive electronic devices that require regular care and maintenance.

Manufacturers offer at least a 12-month warranty against any faulty parts.

The warranty does not cover damage caused by moisture, wax or mistreatment, so it is important to look after the hearing aid. Your audiologist will explain how to do this and can arrange for any repairs to be done.

For children and young people, all repairs and any replacement parts are all funded through [Ko Taku Reo - Deaf Education New Zealand](#) (follow QR code).



Batteries & Consumables

All hearing aids are powered by battery. Some hearing aids are available in a rechargeable model and can be charged daily at home. Other models use a disposable battery, which needs to be replaced on a weekly basis. Your audiologist will discuss the benefits of each model with you and/or your child or young person when choosing the hearing aid.

Disposable batteries are provided free of charge by [Ko Taku Reo - Deaf Education New Zealand](#) (follow QR code above) along with any consumable items needed for the maintenance and use of your, or your child or young person's hearing aids. Your audiologist will advise you how to order replacement batteries and consumables.

Insurance

It is your responsibility to look after hearing aids that the Disability Support Service has paid for. It is strongly recommended that all hearing aids are insured. Most home contents insurance will cover hearing aids, but you may need to advise your insurer that you, your child or young person has them and update the policy. If you need a hearing aid valuation for your insurance policy, please let your audiologist know.

Frequently asked questions

What costs are involved?

Typically, for children and young people, there will not be anything to pay for the hearing aids, service or repairs if they are fitted through a local hospital service.

Are spare sets of hearing aids available?

A spare set of hearing aids is not funded through the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme. If you are concerned about the maintenance of your or your child's hearing aids, please discuss this with your audiologist.

What happens when a child or young person leaves school?

School leavers continuing in full-time education up to 21 years of age remain eligible for support through the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme.

From the age of 21 years old, or if they leave full-time education at a younger age, they may still be eligible for some funding under different criteria or schemes. As a young person transitions out of school their audiologist can discuss potential options for funding. Visit the [Disability Support Services](#) website for further information.

What support is available at school?

Advisers on Deaf Children (AODCs) are employed by the Ministry of Education to provide support to children, families and schools from birth to end of Year 3 of schooling.

Ko Taku Reo - Deaf Education New Zealand provide support and guidance to children, families, teachers and other professional leaders through a network of Outreach School Resource Teachers of the Deaf, known as RTDs.

Your audiologist or school can make a referral to the appropriate service for you, your child or young person.