

HEARING SCREENING

The following recommendations for hearing screening protocols are based on recommendations from the American Speech, Language and Hearing Association and the National Association of School Nurses.

Hearing screening and follow-up programs are done in the schools by the SDE licensed school nurse in order to identify students who have hearing and/or learning impairments that interfere with or have the potential for interfering with the communication and educational process. Estimates of hearing loss vary, but approximately 3%-6% of all children have a significant problem. Authorities also generally agree that early detection of medically remediable hearing loss helps to prevent related problems in speech, social, and educational development.

The identification of hearing problems is accomplished by using individual pure-tone air-conduction testing. If possible, acoustic immittance screening should also be included. A well-balanced program will include screening and rescreening threshold audiometry and referrals for audiological or medical evaluations. Once students are identified by the program, they should be followed on a regular basis to ensure that their communication, educational and medical needs are met. Education and habilitation planning and counseling for parents and teachers should be implemented.

Hearing Screening Procedures

Pure Tone Conduction Testing

- **Equipment:**

A pure tone audiometer, calibrated to standards (American National Standards Institute, ANSI, 1996), must be used. Audiometers are delicate electronic devices, which can be easily damaged. The audiometer needs routine maintenance and accuracy checks by qualified technicians. All audiometers should be electroacoustically checked and serviced (returned to the factory if necessary) at least once a year and more often if a malfunction is suspected. Pure tones are described in terms of pitch or frequency. Hertz (Hz) equals units that define frequency. Loudness is measured in decibels (dB).

- **Students to Be Tested**

Pre-school, kindergarten, first, fifth, eighth and tenth graders are recommended. As a district option, other grades should be screened as time and personnel permit. All students who are referred for testing by teachers, parents, medical providers or other school personnel must be tested. In addition, high risk students and new students, who have no documented evidence of hearing tests at the designated grade levels, should be tested. All students being referred for special education evaluation must be tested according to guidelines developed by the New Mexico Department of Education.

TESTS	Grades To Be Screened														Special Education Evaluation	New Students	Symptomatic History of Hearing Problem
	Ps	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12			
Pure-Tone Audiometry	X	X	X	#	#	#	X	#	#	X	#	X	#	#	X	#	X

X = Screen # = Screen if no previous records available