

# Helping Pediatric Patient's Learn About Their Ears: A Guide To A Child's Hearing Loss and Hearing Aids

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## BACKGROUND

Educating a patient on their hearing loss, why they should use their hearing assistive devices, how their specific devices work, and what to do if those assistive devices stop working all help the patient feel more in charge of their hearing loss. While there is a lot of research on counseling both adult patients and parents of children with hearing loss, there is very little research on counseling pediatric patients directly, and even less on how to counsel and what materials to use.

An article written by Turriff (2018) states, "By focusing on both the clinical aspects of hearing health care... and the individualized needs of each patient, a more meaningful patient-provider relationship can be established. ...Allowing patients to feel that they can be active participants in their hearing health care can help improve patient satisfaction and ensure positive hearing aid outcomes". While in the article the author is referring to the adult population, this statement can be applied to the pediatric population as well, specifically those above the age of 8.

The more an audiologist can cultivate a positive relationship between themselves and their pediatric patient, the more willing the patient will be to actively participate in their care, ask questions during appointments, and advocate for themselves outside of the office.

The goal of this project was to create informational materials for pediatric patients that will guide an audiologist as they counsel their pediatric patients directly. Hopefully access to this information will help their patients increase overall knowledge and utility of their hearing aids.

## METHODS

After reviewing pertinent literature, a gap in clinical knowledge was identified. A customizable, 'kid friendly', learning module discussing a patient's hearing loss and hearing aids was created to fill this gap.

The pediatric counseling tool includes the following sections:

1. How the ear works (anatomy/physiology)
2. Type and degree of hearing loss
3. Hearing aid user guide overview
4. Assistive technology
5. Special features of the hearing aid
6. Listening strategies (school and home)
7. Where to get more information

This document contains a formatted outline for the Audiologists to drag and drop information that is relevant to their specific patient. Once the PDF is created it can either be printed or electronically sent to the patient via email.

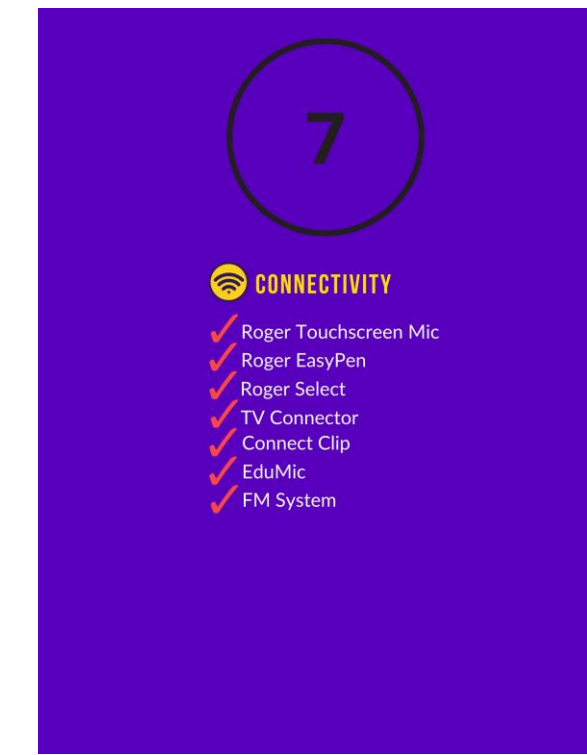
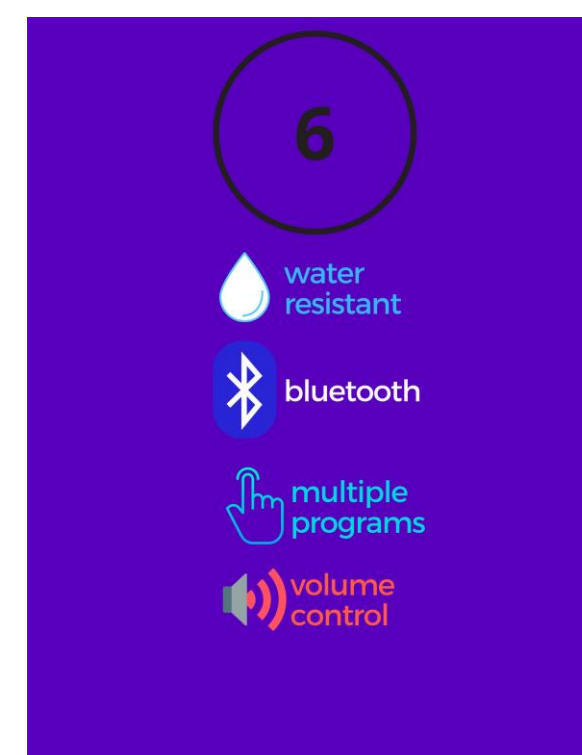
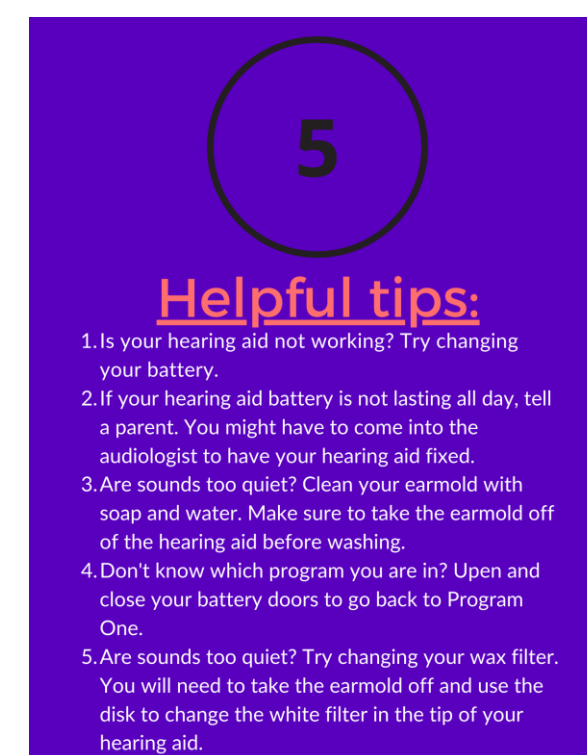
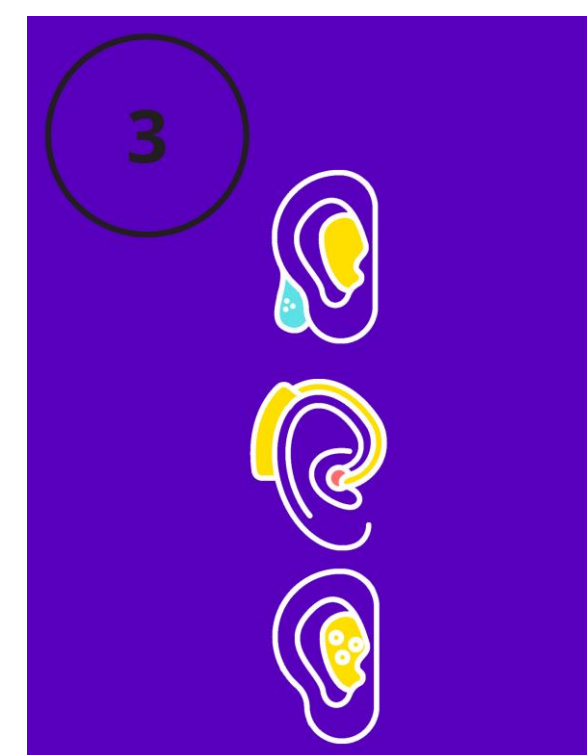
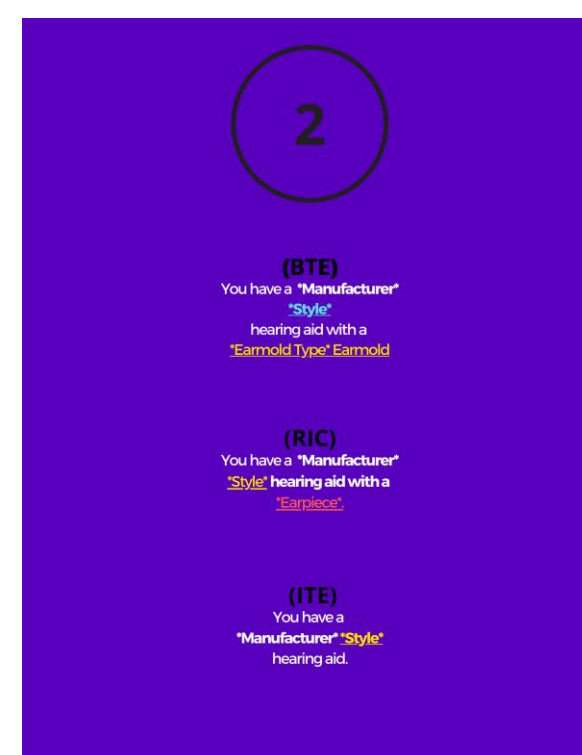
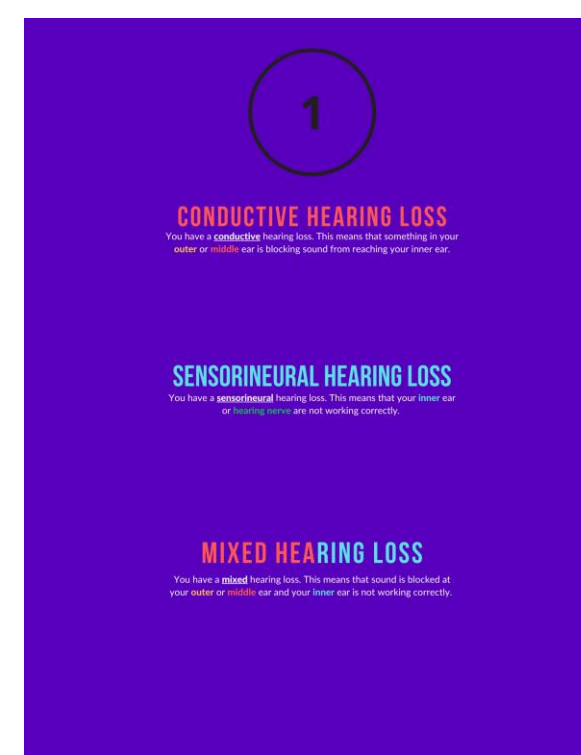
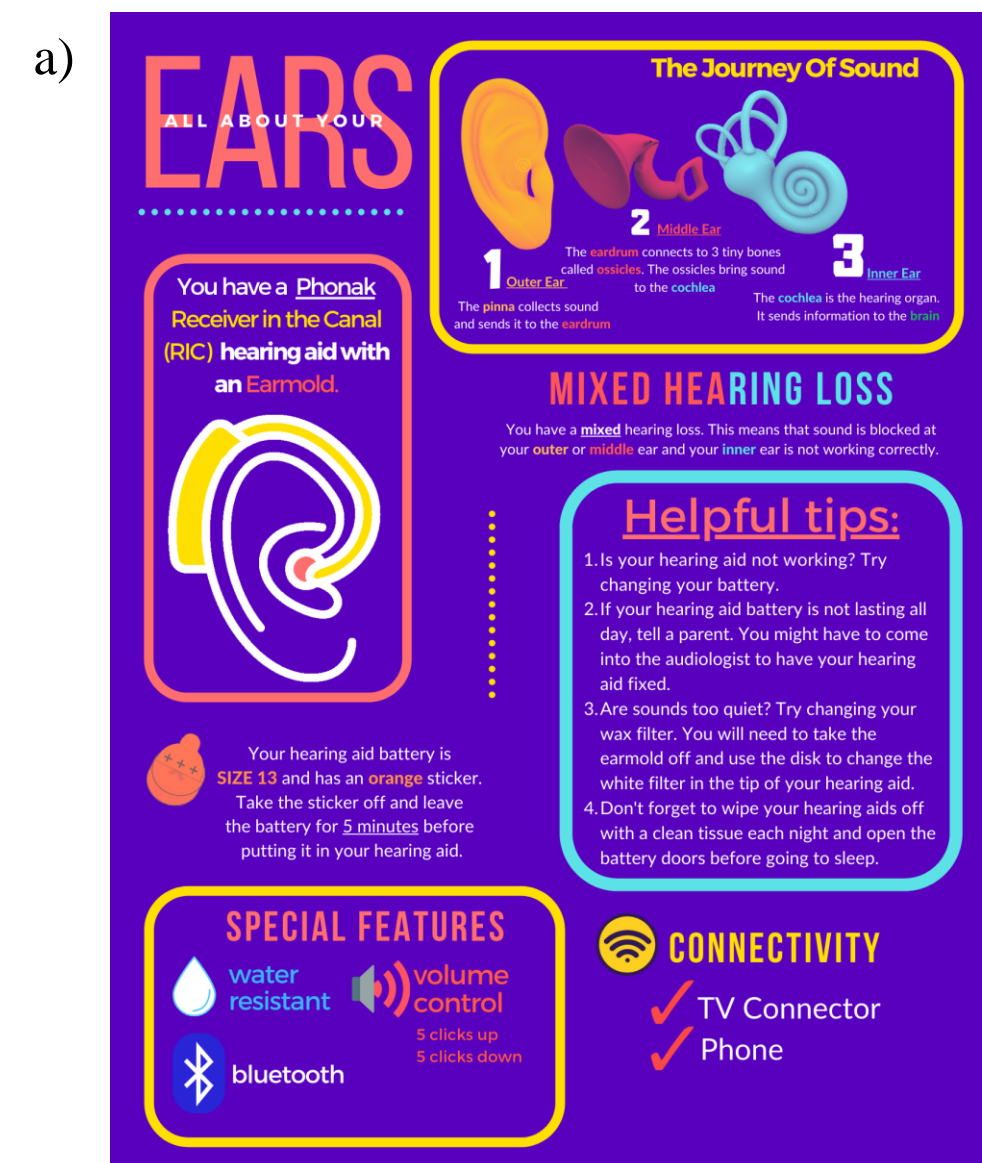
All information is written for the older pediatric patient (above the age of 8) as this is the age identified by Madell (2015) as the age at which children begin to show grief about their hearing loss and may benefit from more direct counseling

The following sources were referenced in the making of this educational and counseling tool:

- McMullen, Kelly-Campbell and Wise (2018), "Improved Hearing Aid User Guide".
- Phonak's "Children's Hearing: A Guide for parents"
- Phonak Sky Marvel user manual
- Oticon OPN Play user manual

## RESULTS

The pediatric audiology tool can be seen below. Figure 'a' is an example of the completed tool. Figure 'b' is the tool outline. Numbered figures are the pages from which information will be copied and pasted into the tool outline at the indicated locations seen in figure 'b'.



## CONCLUSIONS

This tool was created to guide audiologists through informational counseling with their pediatric patient. Not only does it lay a base on which audiologists can build their informational pediatric counseling, but it serves as an educational take-home tool for their patients to use when they are no longer in the clinic.

Patients may utilize this tool when...

- They have questions about their hearing aid
- Their hearing aid sounds different
- They have questions about their hearing loss
- They have questions about connectivity in the classroom

Patients are able to reference the information on this pediatric education tool on their own. This increases self-efficacy as the child now sees that they can take control of their hearing and hearing aids.

This project resulted in a tool to be used by audiologists and pediatric patients; however, this is just a starting point. This guide should not be taken as is and used with every patient. Modifications to this tool should be created for each patient to reflect their type of hearing loss and their specific hearing aid, and to include additional information based on the patient's age. For example, a 14 or 15-year-old patient may want information about not only their type of hearing loss, but also the severity.

## IMPLICATIONS

While this tool was created with the pediatric population in mind, there are other unique populations that audiologists work with who may benefit from a similar tool, such as:

- Patients with Alzheimer's or dementia
- Patients with developmental differences

This tool scratches the surface of direct pediatric counseling. More tools could and should be developed to help further empower pediatric amplification users and promote self-advocacy and self-efficacy.

## DISCLOSURES

There are no financial disclosures for this presentation.

## REFERENCES

1. Madell, J. (2015, April). Counseling & support for children with hearing loss. AudiologyOnline, Article 13758. Retrieved from <http://www.audiologyonline.com>.
2. McMullen, A., Kelly-Campbell, R. J., & Wise, K. (2018). Improving Hearing Aid Self-Efficacy and Utility Through Revising a Hearing Aid User Guide: A Pilot Study. American Journal of Audiology, 27(1), 45–56. doi: 10.1044/2017\_aja-17-0035
3. Turriff, C. (2018). Improving Hearing Aid Outcomes Through Adoption of Patient-Centered Care. Audiology Today, 30(4), 9–11. Retrieved from [https://www.audiology.org/sites/default/files/PracticeManagement/KnoWHow\\_Jul - Aug2018.pdf](https://www.audiology.org/sites/default/files/PracticeManagement/KnoWHow_Jul - Aug2018.pdf)