



### **What is Newborn Hearing Screening?**

Significant hearing loss has become one of the most common major abnormalities present at birth and if undetected, will impede speech, language and cognitive development. Currently in Malaysia, the age of detection of significant hearing loss is between 3 to 5 years old. By then, the child would have suffered significant impairment in speech development.

The aim of newborn hearing screening is to identify hearing loss in newborns and consequently help to guide parents and families to the appropriate services needed to develop communication skills in case of hearing problem.

### **What is the Importance of Newborn Hearing Screening?**

The first months and years of a child's life are very important in the development of speech, language and communication skills. Babies with hearing loss will have difficulties in developing normal language skills. Delay in speech and language may lead to school problems, both academic and social. This is why it is important to detect the loss early allowing for early intervention and rehabilitation.

### **How Do We Screen Hearing?**

Newborn hearing screening usually takes place in the nursery, done soon after birth, before baby is discharged from the hospital. There are two tests that can be used- Otoacoustic emissions (OAE) and automated auditory brainstem response (AABR). Soft sounds are played through earphones and baby's response to the sound is automatically measured by OAE or AABR. Both OAE and AABR are accurate, reliable and painless. Babies who do not pass the screening will be referred to an audiologist for diagnostic audiology testing and will receive a medical examination by a paediatrician.