

App tackles problem of 'glue ear' in children

April 7 2014, by Alex Earnshaw



Aston University is tackling the problem of 'glue ear' in children with a free* hearing test app for any concerned families.

The main cause of temporary childhood deafness in young [children](#) is '[glue ear](#)', which is prevalent during colder months. Known medically as otitis media with effusion, 'glue ear' is associated with a build-up of fluid in the [middle ear](#).

Around one-in-five children will have the condition two years of age. About 80 % of children will have at least one episode by the age of ten. Over weeks and months the [fluid](#) becomes very thick and glue-like, which increases the likelihood of its causing hearing impairment. Usually it is not painful, but failing to detect [hearing loss](#) at a young age can greatly hinder language and speech development.

[The Early Ears app](#), created by audiologists at Aston University, offers a digital version of the McCormick Toy test, which most paediatric health clinics use to help detect hearing loss in [young children](#).

Designed for an iPhone, iPad, or iTouch, the test can be used at home in a quick and fun way –using clear pictures and professionally recorded sounds. The app, which is free until April 10th, 2014 and 69p afterwards, also has access to social media platforms for parents to share results and experiences.

The app offers reassurance and guidance for concerned parents and children find the app fun and playful

Dr Robert Morse from Aston's Audiology team, who helped to develop the app, said; "Early Ears quickly enables you to test your child's hearing in your own home. The app offers reassurance and guidance for concerned parents and children find the app fun and playful. I recently watched a parent use it with their daughter who is just under two year's old and the daughter thought it was just a game."

Dr Morse added; "While this app is a good way to help you detect any hearing problems, if you do notice your child has had several episodes of glue ear, or you are at all concerned about potential hearing loss, then you should discuss it with a medical advisor, for example your school nurse, audiologist, or doctor."

Provided by Aston University

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