

# The Place for Better Hearing

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## How to Get Kids to Learn to Listen Safely

With all the personal listening devices children use these days, such as iPods, it's possible for a substantial amount of loud sound to go into their ears for long periods of time. This can result in noise-induced hearing loss, which will stay with them for life.

Research published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (August 18, 2011) showed that teen hearing loss jumped 31 percent between the 1988-1994 time period and the 2005-2006 period. The research shows that one in five U.S. teens – approximately 6.5 million – had hearing loss in 2005-2006.

Like any other warning parents issue to teens, the warning about damaging hearing by listening to loud music falls on deaf ears, so to speak. But do try to find a way to protect your child's hearing because hearing that has been lost cannot be regained.

It may be unreasonable to unplug your child from an iPod completely, but you can monitor loudness in a simple way: If you are three feet or more from your child and can identify the song playing on the iPod, it's too loud. If you don't want ongoing arguments about this, you can buy KidzSafe Ear Buds. They keep the decibel level below 85 no matter how high your child turns up the volume on the iPod. KidzSafe Ear Buds are compatible with all personal audio devices.

If you can manage to educate your child about the risk of noise-induced hearing loss, this information will be valuable through life. Here are several resources with kid appeal.

- [Hearnet.com](http://Hearnet.com) is a great website by rock and roll artists who have lost their hearing from loud music. Hearnet features the "Listen Smart" "rockumentary" produced by Hearing

Education and Awareness for Rockers (H.E.A.R.), warning about the dangers of noise-induced hearing loss. It is geared toward music lovers and prospective rock and rollers.

- For tweens, there is “It’s a Noisy Planet,” sponsored by the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, [www.noisyplanet.nidcd.nih.gov](http://www.noisyplanet.nidcd.nih.gov).
- The “Crank It Down” campaign at [www.hearingconservation.org](http://www.hearingconservation.org) uses song lyrics to help kids remember good hearing practices. “Crank It Down” offers noise rules that spell out EARS: E = earplugs, A = avoid loud sounds, R = reduce the volume, S = shorten the time you spend in noise. This campaign is from the American Academy of Audiology.
- Another educational tool using music, also from the American Academy of Audiology, is the rap song “Turn It to the Left” (turn the volume down), [www.TurnItToTheLeft.com](http://www.TurnItToTheLeft.com). The lyrics educate kids about the dangers of exposure to loud noise levels.
- To become more knowledgeable yourself, take a look Dangerous Decibels at [www.dangerousdecibels.org](http://www.dangerousdecibels.org) to understand noise-induced hearing loss and what you can do to prevent it.

It’s a good idea to have your child’s hearing checked early, to establish a baseline. Then you will know on future checks whether hearing is declining. Noise-induced hearing loss is the only type of hearing loss that can be prevented. Hearing loss can cause your child to miss out on what is being said in school, in a career and in life. Hearing aids can improve hearing, but nothing works as well as natural hearing.

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