Know Your Options: Early Intervention and Treatment Services Across the Lifespan

Addressing hearing loss isn’t a one-size-fits-all approach. Options exist across the lifespan:

**Infants and Toddlers**: The earlier that hearing loss is identified, and intervention begins, the greater the chances that children will develop language and meet other developmental milestones as expected. Intervention may include a combination of approaches. These include **hearing amplification**, such as hearing aids and cochlear implants (children can receive hearing aids at 4 weeks and cochlear implants at 12 months), use of **signed language** (such as American Sign Language), and **other communication modalities**. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) ensures that U.S. children who are eligible receive the services they need, from birth through age 21.

**Older Children and Adolescents**: Under IDEA, local school districts provide education services designed to meet the individual needs of students with hearing loss who qualify. If a child with hearing loss is found eligible for services, an individualized education program (IEP) may specify intervention from audiologists, speech-language pathologists, and teachers of the deaf or hard of hearing to facilitate school success. A classroom can be fitted with certain technologies to further assist a child. Treatment may also occur outside of school.

**Adults**: A variety of options are available for adults. **Hearing aids** come in different styles and offer a range of features that allow people to make product choices based on their own comfort, preferences, and specific hearing difficulties. They are suitable for people with mild to profound hearing loss. **Cochlear implants** are surgically implanted devices in the inner ear, suitable for some adults with severe hearing loss. **Assistive listening devices** (e.g., hearing loops, directional microphones, captioning, etc.) can help people hear in loud places or in problematic listening situations (e.g., talking on the phone). **Audiologic/aural rehabilitation** helps people live with their hearing loss and includes using techniques that help them listen better, using visual clues (e.g., speechreading), and counseling people on their legal rights.

Learn more at [www.asha.org/public](http://www.asha.org/public) and [www.hearingloss.org](http://www.hearingloss.org).