Conditioned Play Audiometry

Conditioned play audiometry, often called CPA, is a method to test the hearing of children from about 2 to 5 years of age. The audiologist uses this method to find the softest level a child can hear for low, mid, and high-pitched sounds. To find the softest sound your child can hear the audiologist plays a listening game with your child. For example, when your child hears a sound they put a plastic token in a piggy bank, or a block in a bucket, or a piece in a puzzle.

Sometimes children need to practice the listening game so that they feel more comfortable playing the game with the audiologist. You can help your child learn and be ready for the hearing test by practicing the game at home.

First pick a game that is quiet and that your child can hold. Second, decide what sound you will use, a bell, a tone from your phone, your voice. Make sure the sound is at a level your child can hear and let the child see you make the sound. Third, have your child hold the toy to their cheek and listen for the sound, you may need to put your hand on their hand and guide them Then when they hear the sound, they can put the block in the bucket or the puzzle piece in the puzzle. Praise your child and make it fun for them. Keep doing it together until your child learns what to do. Once they can do the task on their own you can take away the visual cue. You want your child to respond by hearing the sound, not by picking up on other cues. As you practice, vary how much time you wait in between sounds and avoid getting into a pattern. Keep this activity fun and engaging by using different toys and different sounds.

The audiologist will test each ear separately and to do this your child will wear earphones. You can also practice having your child wear earphones to help them know what to expect during their hearing test. The audiologist might ask you to help by having you hand your child the toy during testing. Ask your audiologist what to expect during the appointment and other ways you can help to prepare your child.