

Audiology Evaluations

Understanding the Difference Between Medical and School-Based Audiology

Your child's hearing can be checked in **medical settings** and **school settings**. Although both involve audiology, they serve **different purposes**. This flyer explains how they differ and how they work together to support your child.

Medical Audiology Exam

Why it's done:

To diagnose hearing loss and medical conditions of the ear.

Where:

Hospital, clinic, ENT office, or private audiology practice.

Provided by:

Licensed medical audiologist.

What it looks at:

- Type and degree of hearing loss
- Ear and auditory system health

May include:

- Detailed hearing tests
- Speech understanding tests
- Middle ear testing
- Other medical/diagnostic procedures

Results help to:

- Diagnose hearing loss
- Recommend medical treatment or hearing aids
- Provide medical documentation

Cost:

Typically billed through health insurance.

School-Based Audiology Evaluation

Why it's done:

To determine how hearing affects learning in the classroom.

Where:

At school or as part of a school evaluation.

Provided by:

School or educational audiologist.

What it looks at:

- Access to instruction and classroom communication
- Functional listening in school environments

May include:

- Hearing screening or limited testing
- Classroom listening observations
- Teacher and parent input

Results help to:

- Determine eligibility for services
- Identify classroom supports or accommodations
- Inform IEP or 504 Plan decisions

Cost:

Free to families as part of public education.

Quick Comparison

Medical Audiology

- Medical diagnosis
- Clinical setting
- Comprehensive testing
- Focuses on ear health

School-Based Audiology

- Educational impact
- School setting
- Learning-focused testing
- Focuses on classroom access

Important Reminders

- School-based evaluations **do not replace** medical audiology exams.
- Schools may recommend a medical exam if concerns are identified.
- Both evaluations together provide the best support for your child's health and learning.

Questions? Contact your school team or healthcare provider for guidance.