

INCREASING HEARING AID WEAR TIME WITH A VISUAL TIMER: A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

A visual timer is a simple tool for providing visual reinforcement!

Why should you use a visual timer?

- Visual timers can help individuals stay on task
 - Many children can get distracted or forget they are trying to achieve their goal; a visual timer can be a clear and constant reminder for your child of what they are currently working towards
- Visual timers can make it easier to tolerate tasks
 - A visual timer shows your child how much longer they need to keep wearing their hearing aids to meet their goal
 - As the time continues to decrease, your child is getting reinforcement for how much progress they have already made in reaching their goal and receiving their reward

How can you appropriately use a visual timer?

1. With your clinician, select an achievable amount of time for your child
 - a. For example, if they are taking off their hearing aid every 30 minutes, set the timer for 25 minutes
2. Select a visual timer that works best for you
 - a. There are many types of visual timers that you can use including stopwatches, simple kitchen timers, talking timers, color alert timers, and even free applications on your phone
 - i. The timer should be a simple and clear way for your child to see their progress and understand the expectation/goal
3. Clearly tell your child the goal and start the timer, make sure they can see the timer clearly!
 - a. For example, “Ok buddy we are going to keep our hearing aids on for 25 minutes. If you can keep your hearing aids on for 25 minutes you will get a gummy bear” and start the timer.
4. Once they have kept their hearing aids on for the expected amount of time (and the timer stops), give your child the reward and praise!
5. You can then take the hearing aid off, immediately put it back on and re-start the timer. “Great job buddy, let’s do it again! If you can keep your hearing aids on for 25 minutes you will get another gummy bear!”

If your child takes their hearing aids off before reaching their goal:

- The timer should re-start; do not pause the timer!
- Remain neutral; do not give them any attention (positive or negative) because this can make them want to continue taking the hearing aids off because they are getting your attention
- Wait 1-2 minutes, put the hearing aids back on and say, “Let’s try again” and re-start the timer