

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** **Contact: (Name)**

 **(Phone, Email)**

**Video Gaming and Other Noisy Leisure Activities Could Put Children at Risk for Permanent Noise-Induced Hearing Loss**

*(City)-Based Audiologist Stresses Simple Steps to Prevent Hearing Damage*

**(City, State – Date)** With permanent noise-induced hearing loss posing a growing health threat to children and young adults, one local expert is using this May—*National Speech-Language-Hearing Month*—to inform families about how they can protect their children.

More than 1 billion young people worldwide could develop hearing loss due to unsafe habits while playing video games, listening to music, and attending noisy events such as concerts, festivals, and fireworks displays, according to global estimates.

“I want parents to know about this risk, which is present year-round but is potentially heightened during the summer months when children are out of school and have more time to spend participating in noisy activities and being in noisy environments,” says (full name, credential, job title/place of employment).

“Regular exposure to sounds that are too loud for too long can cause irreversible hearing damage, and children are particularly vulnerable to this form of hearing loss.”

There is good news, (last name) stresses. Noise-induced hearing loss is completely preventable. (She/he/they) (says/say) parents and caregivers should know about exposure to this noise and hearing loss:

**How loud is too loud?** Many earbuds, headphones, and smart devices reach volumes of 100 decibels (dB) or higher. Similarly, many activities such as concerts and sporting events can get this loud. This goes well beyond a level that is safe for children’s (or adults’) hearing—which is generally a maximum of 75 dB, according to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA).

**How long is too long?** The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that children spend no more than 40 hours per week listening to a personal audio device (again, at levels no higher than 75 dB). Although 40 hours per week may sound like a lot, this time adds up quickly. When it comes to noisy events, the louder it is, the less time you can spend there safely. Regardless, any ringing or pain in the ears indicates that you should leave immediately.

**Advice for Families**

(Last name) shares these tips from ASHA to prevent hearing damage in children:

* **Talk to your child about the importance of hearing protection.** Help them appreciate that their hearing is something they enjoy—it’s worth protecting.
* **Encourage listening breaks every hour when using earbuds or headphones.** Even a few minutes of quiet makes a big difference for healthy ears. The same goes for noisy events such as concerts: Try to step outside every hour for a quick break.
* **Have them use volume limiters on their devices—if that option is available.** Regardless, teach kids to keep the volume level at no higher than half.
* **Consider purchasing noise-cancelling headphones.** These products reduce outside noise that may be competing with what they’re trying to hear through their headphones, so they don’t need to crank up the volume.
* **Provide plenty of “device-free” time.** This benefits a child’s hearing and also encourages creativity, imagination, learning, physical activity, and more.
* **Use hearing protection at noisy events.** Simple foam earplugs are inexpensive and available at most drugstores. These earplugs offer good protection for older kids and teens. Younger kids should use well-fitting earmuff-style hearing protection.
* **Be a good role model.** “Practice what you preach” when it comes to safe listening. Take breaks, keep the volume down, and use hearing protection. You’ll protect your own hearing while setting an excellent example for your kids.

**Signs of Hearing Loss**

Many children don’t have their hearing screened every year, so it’s important to learn the signs of hearing loss. If you notice that your child does any of the following, take them to an audiologist for a hearing evaluation:

* turns the TV volume up to a level that is uncomfortable for others
* says, “Huh?” or “What?” often
* has academic difficulties that can’t be attributed to other causes
* complains of ringing, buzzing, or other noises in their ears

Timely action on any hearing concerns is key. Even a minimal or mild hearing loss—if left unaddressed—can significantly affect a child’s success in school, their interactions with peers, and their behavior.

For more information, visit [IdentifytheSigns.org](https://www.identifythesigns.org). To schedule a hearing evaluation with (last name), contact (phone number or email address).

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