

“I am Junior’s earmold”- A report from the trenches

By Brad Ingrao, MEd CCC-A



Earmold: “Hello. Yes you. The tall one who makes all the rules. It’s me. Junior’s earmold. I’d like to have a word with you. My family and I have been sitting here, doing our job

ever since Junior was 6 months old. You know the Hearing Aid by name, rank *and* serial number. He’s sitting pretty up there behind the ear. He gets his name in the newspaper, on the radio, even in *Popular Mechanics*. When was the last time you even thought about me?

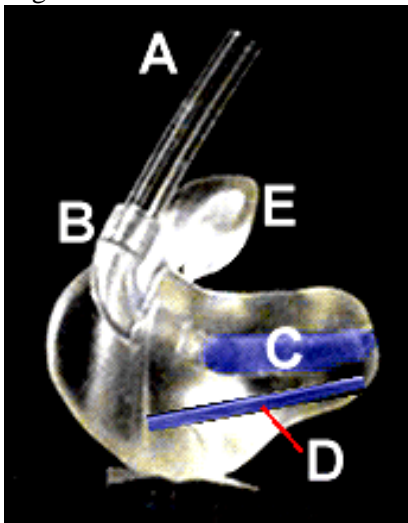


Fig. 1 (A) Tubing (B) CFA Adapter (C) Bore (D) Vent (E) Helix

Let me introduce myself. My name is Vinyl Shell Earmold, and I have some very important parts. A picture is worth a thousand worlds, so here goes.

Now that’s not so bad. Let me tell you why each of these is so important. The Tubing (A) is how all that wonderful sound gets from the hearing aid to Junior’s eardrum. It comes in different sizes, but the most common is #13.

Since Junior has a moderate hearing loss, #13 standard is fine. His friend Anna’s tubing is #13 double wall because she had a profound loss. Other tubes emphasize high frequencies (Libby Horn), or are treated to resist moisture.

The CFA adapter (B) is not on every earmold, but I really like it. It makes sure the tubing stays the size the audiologist wants it to be to give Junior the best sound. Remember the mold Junior had last year with that metal ring inside? That “tube lock” pinches the tube and *reduces* high frequencies. Did you notice that Junior’s “s” and “sh” are much clearer since the CFA?

My bore (C) is my most important part. If it changes, Junior’s hearing can change by as much as 15 dB! The bore also allows me to help Junior hear things even his hearing aid can’t. The CFA #2 bore adds 12 dB at 4000 Hz. The CFA #4 adds 18 dB, but be careful, Junior’s small ear canal also amplifies high frequencies, so check with the audiologist about making CFA bore changes.

Not to complain, but your kid’s ear is one hot sweaty place. Thank goodness for my vent (D). It circulates air and balances the sound of the hearing aid. My helix (E) helps keep me in place.

We earmolds are made of three

different materials: Lucite, Vinyl, and Silicone. Those Lucite guys are too hard for kids. Silicone needs a tube lock, and is hard to grind and buff. I’m made of Vinyl, and I think that’s the best for Junior, but you need to keep me clean so I can do my job. The next time Junior hops in the tub, pull me off the hearing aid and drop me in a cup of warm water. It’ll get all that yucky wax out of my bore and the oil off my surface. This will help me seal better and reduce feedback.

One more thing. Did you know that we earmolds come in different colors? Junior is a kid, and should have fun. If his earmold is a neat color, Junior will feel better about having to wear a hearing aid, and his friends will think it’s a neat thing, instead of a weird thing. Some hearing aids are even available in neat colors too.

I’m glad we had this little talk. I hate to brag, but I really do make or break the hearing aid fitting.

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