Tip for Tots -Doing "with"

This example is outlined in "Toddlers and their Mothers" by Erna Furman P 122. Watch next issue for another example of how a mother came to understand when the "doing with" stage has passed in toddlerhood.

hen a baby is born, one reason the mother is able to give so much to the baby is because the baby feels almost like part of her. Usually a baby has come from the mother's body, she holds it close to her body to feed, and often the milk flows from the mother into the baby, linking them in a close way. Adopted babies "become one" with the mother by being held close during feeding, through the many ways mothers and infants interact. Hopefully mothers "fall in love" with their infants. This is called "narcissistic" love, and this kind of love enables mothers to give to their infants in profound ways. The mother and infant are so close, the mother feels almost like she is looking after a part of herself.

As the infant matures and becomes separate from his mother, narcissistic love must slowly change into "object" love for the child to develop well. This is when a mother can begin to love her child for who the child is, rather than because the child and the mother are so close that they feel almost like one person.

There are many pitfalls for mothers as they move towards this new stage of lov-

Cory Soal

Hearing Aid

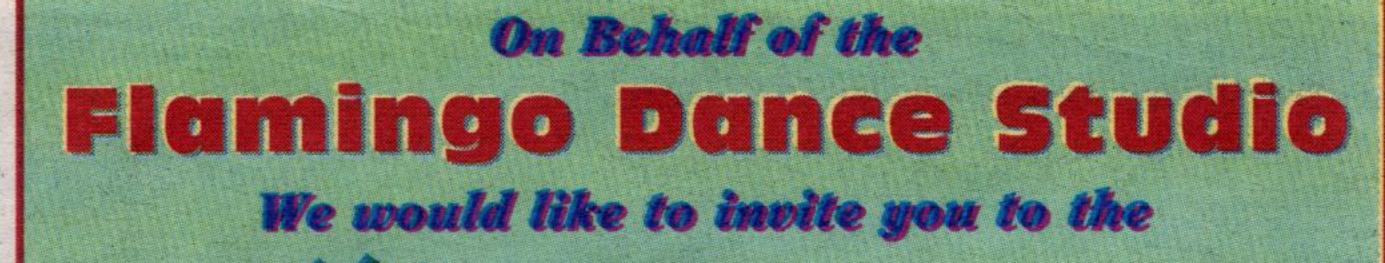
Practitioner

Kelly Kirkwood

Audiologist

ing. There can be a wish on the mother's part to enjoy this blissful stage beyond what works well for the child. Some of these pitfalls can be seen in the area of bodily self-care. How children undertake the task of dressing themselves and how mothers encourage them to do so can be fraught with difficulties. For example, Jeremy, just under two, simply let himself be dressed, cuddling into his mother. He showed no initiative to dress himself, although a smart boy. He sensed correctly that his mother enjoyed dressing him, and that she was reluctant to give up this pleasure. Adapting to his mother's need, Jeremy appeared to have surrendered his independence - but at a cost. He would cast sideways glances at his more accomplished peers in his mom and toddler program and then look downward, as if ashamed. He often refused to try new activities, insisting on his mother's help, never trusting himself to manage alone.

When Jeremy's mother became sensitive to Jeremy's wish to do more for himself and to do well, they started working on Jeremy's dressing and took the first steps towards Jeremy participating in the task. Jeremy's mother was "doing with" Jeremy, and they both experienced a great deal of gratification in this new stage. It was clear that Jeremy felt very proud of each small achievement.





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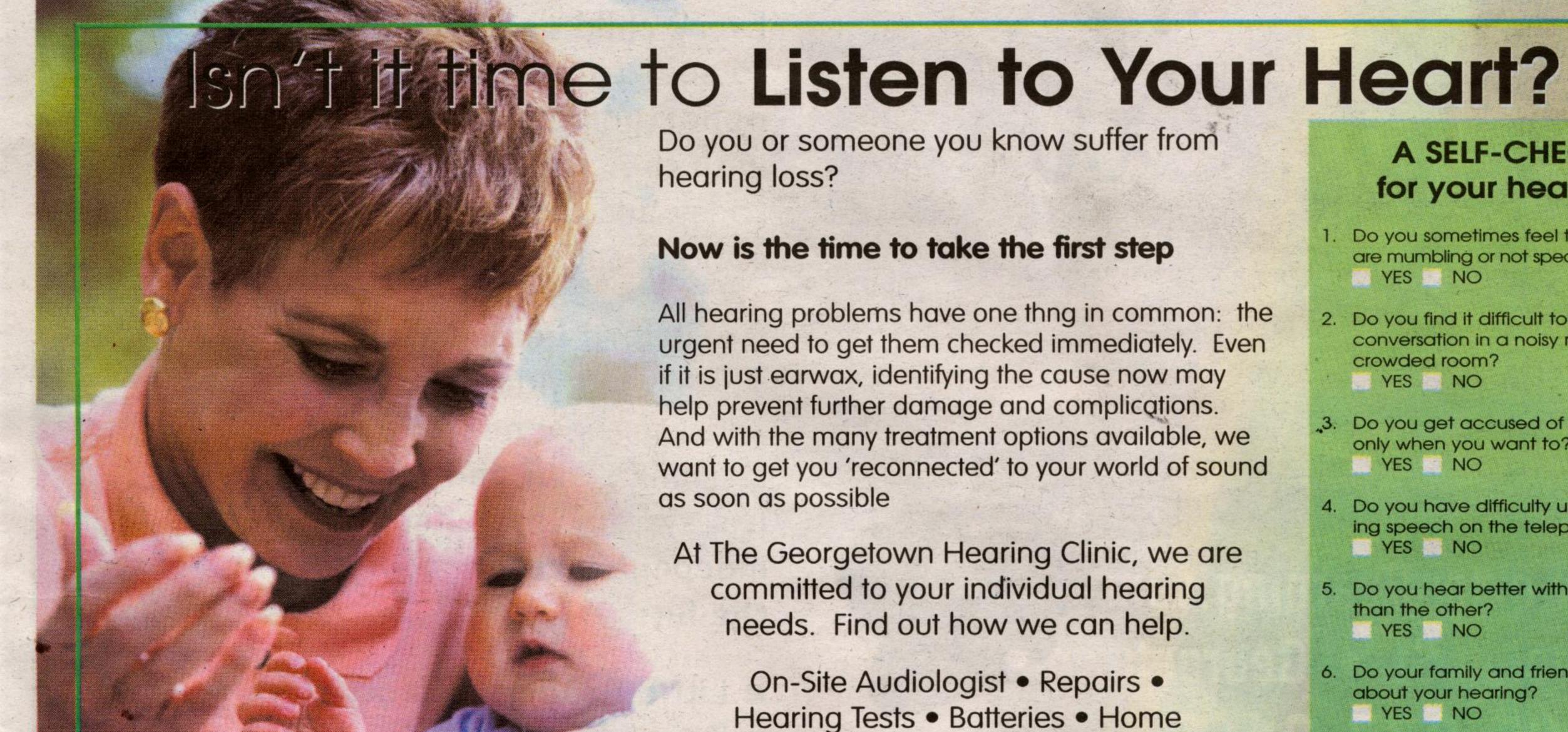
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- Do you hear better with one ear than the other? YES NO
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