

The mother of invention

New business offers children's accessories to meet special needs

BY EMILY PRIDDY

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For a young child, having to wear a hearing aid can be a scary proposition, but a new Tulsa company is working to make the experience a little less intimidating.

Jacque Scholl, a pediatric audiologist, said advances in medical technology make it possible to detect hearing loss in very young children, but products haven't always kept up with the times.

"The tools we have to work with our babies are all made for toddlers and adults, and there's a huge difference in how you fit an 8-week-old as opposed to how you fit even an 8-month-old," she said.

To address the problem, Scholl teamed up with her friends Kristi Carpenter, a speech-language pathologist, and Miranda Pautler, a stay-at-home mom, to develop products for babies and children with hearing loss.

The women's company, Kidlfix Concepts, sells a variety of products, including hearing aid maintenance kits that include small items such as wig tape to keep hearing aids in place and lanolin cream that helps ensure hearing aids fit properly as children grow.

Scholl said the wig tape is especially helpful with infants.

"You can actually stick it (the hearing aid) to their head so it doesn't flop off, because they've got itty-bitsy ears," Scholl said.

Carpenter designed little personalized bags to keep everything together.

The bags are practical, but they also are stylish enough that children enjoy carrying them, which helps them feel better about wearing a hearing aid, Carpenter said.

In addition to products for



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Kristi Carpenter, left, helps Jacque Scholl adjust the device Scholl designed to make a child's hearing aid fit properly. The device, which looks like a headband, is designed to help the hearing aid fit tightly enough to work without being uncomfortable. If the device works, Kidlfix will begin selling it in a few weeks.

children with hearing loss, Kidlfix offers the kind of stylish but affordable baby accessories its founders wanted but could not find for their own children.

"We couldn't find it at the store, or we didn't like the fabrics, so we did it ourselves," said Pautler, a stay-at-home mom whose own company, Pautluck, makes blankets, picture frames and pillowcases for Kidlfix.

For instance, Pautler's 3-year-old was attending the Mother's Day Out program and needed a blanket and small pillow for nap-time.

Pautler couldn't find a pillow-

For more information on Kidlfix Concepts, go to www.kidlfix.com.

case or blanket the right size, so she made her own.

Carpenter, meanwhile, was making colorful overnight bags as gifts for her nieces and nephews.

The huge bags have no zippers, latches or other hardware, so they are easy for young children and busy mothers to pack.

"You just lay them down, you throw everything in them, and you just cinch them up," said

Carpenter, who recently adopted two children.

The women use their own families as guinea pigs.

Scholl said her son, Nicholas, 3, test-drives bags and blankets, while Carpenter's nieces and nephews offer valuable feedback.

"Anytime we go to my mom's house and my nieces and nephews go, 'Oh — I want one,' we know we've hit the jackpot," Carpenter said.

Kidlfix offers a variety of products for babies and toddlers.

Items can be personalized, and custom work is available.