OTITIS MEDIA (MIDDLE EAR INFECTION)

What is Otitis Media?
Otitis Media is an infection of the middle ear, an inflamed eardrum and can also cause pain and fever. In some cases there may also be presence of fluid in the middle ear (also known as “glue ear”). Fluid in the middle ear prevents the normal vibration of the eardrum, which results in temporary hearing loss. Medical intervention can easily resolve the problems.

How deaf are children with Otitis Media?
This depends on the child and varies considerably. Some children have only one ear infection or they only have very mild hearing loss that is not noticeable. For some children, the infection can result in moderate hearing loss for a short period of time (acute cases) or over an ongoing period of time (chronic cases). The hearing loss can also vary on a day to day basis.

What causes Otitis Media?
A specific cause has not been identified. However it is believed that it probably results from an unresolved infection in the middle ear, due to the Eustachian tube not operating correctly (The Eustachian tube passes from the back of the throat to the ear and is generally not fully developed in children.)

What ages are affected?
While children can be affected at any age up to ten years, the condition is most common in the preschool and early school years. It is uncommon after 10 years of age.

Some signs indicating otitis media include:-
- history of sore ears
- not responding to normal conversation voice levels
- the television may be louder than usual
- child may rub their ears
- may be unusual behavioural problems – disobedient, acting out.