

Auditory Processing Disorder

If you have a child who is struggling with an auditory processing disorder (APD), you probably have many questions. And the biggest question of all is, “What can I do to help?”

What Is Auditory Processing Disorder?

In a child with APD, the brain doesn’t recognize and interpret sounds correctly—*especially* the sounds that make up speech. Your child may *appear* to have an auditory deficit, but in most cases, hearing is not the problem. It’s like there’s a disconnect somewhere between the ears and the brain. He can hear what you say; he just can’t always process it.

What Are the Signs of Auditory Processing Disorder?

The symptoms of auditory processing disorder can range from mild to severe and may look different from child to child. APD is diagnosed by an audiologist, but the child who has APD may display many of the following characteristics.

- He may struggle to hear in crowded, noisy places.
- He may frequently ask you to repeat yourself.
- He may appear to be inattentive or he may be easily distracted.
- He has difficulty following directions.
- He may have noticeable speech delays.
- He may seem to have heard you when he hasn’t.



10 Ways to Help Your Child Learn

These tips may help you make your lesson times more productive and more enjoyable for both you and your child.

- 1** Speak slowly and enunciate clearly. Pausing as you give instructions can also help your child process what you're saying.
- 2** Allow for "lag time" while your child processes what you have said. Let your words sink in for a few seconds before expecting a response or before moving on.
- 3** Be concise and direct—don't attempt long oral explanations. Give simple instructions, one step at a time. Instructing your child to "clean up your room, put on your pajamas, and brush your teeth" may be more than your child can handle.
- 4** Work in a quiet room with as few distractions as possible. Listening and processing is hard enough for an APD child; distractions make it nearly impossible.
- 5** Optimize concentration and minimize "meltdowns" by holding lessons during your child's best time of day.
- 6** Make sure that your child can watch your mouth as you speak. This is especially important if he easily confuses similar-sounding words. In APD learners, the ears and brain don't work well together, so watching your mouth will help bring everything into synch. The sounds get "crisper" when the brain has visual cues to go along with the auditory cues.
- 7** As much as possible, *show* rather than *tell*.
- 8** Visual demonstrations are much more effective than oral explanations. If your APD child is struggling to learn a new concept or skill, try to teach the concept with a visual demonstration.

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Don't overwhelm your child. Children with auditory processing issues can become disruptive or argumentative when they don't understand something. If your child becomes frustrated and you sense a meltdown coming, back up in the lesson to a point where your child is more comfortable. Try presenting the new information again when your child seems ready to tackle it.

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Consistent and constant review encourages success, especially for APD learners. To ensure steady progress, be sure to include review in your lessons every single day.

Your child will face many challenges as an APD learner, but there is hope. By applying some of the tips above during your instruction times, you can help your child overcome these challenges. Just take it one day at a time, and over time you will see progress—and a much happier child.

Contact Us

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