

WHAT IS AUDITORY PROCESSING DISORDER?

Auditory processing disorder is a condition associated with hearing and impacts the ability to perceive and interpret sounds. As a consequence, the ability to hear with accuracy to respond appropriately is impaired. It can lead to a number of difficulties at home and at school.

Auditory processing difficulties can be difficult to detect as an individual usually can pass an audiologist assessment satisfactorily. However, it becomes more apparent when sounds are complex, such as in speech and in a noisy or busy classroom.

The main areas of difficulty are:

- Difficulty in **interpreting** auditory information with accuracy
- Difficulty in **discriminating** between sounds
- Difficulty in **processing** the auditory information to provide an appropriate response
- **Over sensitivity** to sounds leading to poor discrimination
- Difficulty in **concentrating** when there is a high volume of background noise
- Difficulty in **remembering** information provided verbally
- There may be associated **specific learning difficulties**, such as dyslexia

The main facts:

- The exact causes for auditory processing difficulties are not widely known, but can be exacerbated by glue ear
- Auditory processing disorder is not a form of autism, but individuals with autism may experience auditory processing difficulties
- It is not associated with a physical hearing impairment but relates to the ability to process and perceive auditory information within the brain
- It can impact the acquisition of speech and you may need to involve a speech and language therapist
- It can lead to subsequent difficulties in social interaction and social communication due to difficulties in processing auditory information within busy environments
- There may be associated behavioural difficulties due to hypersensitivity
- There may be associated literacy difficulties due to late development of speech and language



Main areas of difficulty:	Things to look for:
The interpretation of auditory information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mis-hearing information or instructions• Appears to be distant or doesn't hear you• Inattentive• Or extreme focus upon one activity at a time• Asks you to repeat an instruction• Appears to struggle to understand simple information or instructions• Difficulty in understanding complex multisyllabic words, complex phrases or sentences
The ability to discriminate between the subtleties of sounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poor articulation in speech• 'f' and 'th', 'ch' and 'sh' and other sounds confusion beyond usual age• Confusion between ty and teen numbers• Difficulty in blending sounds to build words, such as c-a-t = cat• Confuses basic vowel sounds: e.g. 'u' and 'o' or 'l' and 'e'• Struggles to speak multisyllabic words clearly• Difficulty in rhyming and hearing a rhyming pattern• Difficulty in spelling similar sounding words, such as homophones
The ability to process auditory information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May be late talking due to difficulty in putting strings of words together• May appear to be forgetful; forgets instructions or information• Appears distant when someone is talking• Difficulty in recitation• Appears distant and not to listen• Easily forgets instructions or information• Forgets basic letters of the alphabet, how to assign a sound to a group of letters: e.g. ay, ai, ee,• Difficulty in recalling information and ideas – discrepancy between aural and written work• Spelling is disorganised – omissions, reversals, visual differences (said – siad), auditory errors: do/du• Forgets what they were going to write• May be slow to respond to verbal instructions• Word retrieval difficulties• Late to associate sounds with words for reading• Slow reading
Difficulty in concentration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May cover ears (or eyes) in a noisy environment• Easily forgets information or instructions• Appears not to hear you



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Struggles to maintain concentration when there is a lot of noise or when the teacher is talking
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