

Auditory Processing Disorder: Fact Sheet

Characteristics of Auditory Processing Disorders

- Difficulty following multi-step directives
- Trouble understanding in noisy listening environments
- Poor listening skills
- Academic performance does not match ability
- Struggles to pay attention
- May exhibit auditory memory issues
- Need more time to process auditory information
- Difficulty with reading, spelling, math word problems and vocabulary
- Disorganized and forgetful
- Tire easily when engaged in listening tasks for extended periods
- May have problems with receptive language or comprehending abstract information
- Often look for visual cues to help “fill in” gaps they miss through oral information
- Become frustrated and may exhibit behavior problems

What is an Auditory Processing Disorder?

An auditory processing disorder is a condition in which the brain’s interpretation of sounds is adversely affected. Individuals with auditory processing disorders (APD) often do not recognize subtle differences in sounds of words even though the sounds are loud and clear enough. This difficulty becomes more pronounced in noisy or adverse listening environments or when listening to complex information.

What is the prevalence of APD?

Some research has suggested a prevalence of 2-3% in the pediatric population (Chermak and Musiek, 2001), with other estimates at 3-5% (Santucci cited in Matson, 2005). A 2:1 ratio of boys to girls has also been cited.

Evaluations and Best Practices

A full hearing assessment must be conducted before an auditory processing evaluation can be performed. APD evaluations should only be performed on children age 7 or older due to the complexities of the tests. Exceptions to this recommendation may be made after consultation with other pediatric specialists including, but not limited to, speech-language pathologists and psychologists.

Who should be referred?

Any child who appears to not be hearing well should first be referred for a hearing assessment. If hearing is normal, an auditory processing screening should be performed. Children with medical history’s that indicate frequent middle ear infections, hyperbilirubinemia, problems with attention or focus, or the other characteristics listed on this fact sheet should be referred. Note that many of the behavioral complaints seen with children with ADD/ADHD are similar to those seen with APD.

Treatment Options

Treatment options are determined based on the specific auditory deficits that exist for each child. Treatment plans typically consist of environmental modifications, compensatory strategies, assistive listening devices to improve access to auditory information and auditory training or therapy.

For additional information please visit:

<http://www.asha.org/public/hearing/Understanding-Auditory-Processing-Disorders-in-Children/>

http://www.medicinenet.com/auditory_processing_disorder_in_children/article.htm