Auditory Processing Information

Information for patients, relatives and carers

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Auditory Processing Information

Most of us hear well and don’t give much thought to how we hear. Hearing starts with a complex set of actions within the outer, middle and inner ear. These actions send the sounds to our brain, and our brain interprets them so we can understand them.

For example it tells us the whistling we hear is a bird singing. This is what we call auditory processing. When a child’s ears are working well, but the child cannot understand the sounds they hear, they may be experiencing auditory processing difficulties (APD).
Is APD related to any other difficulties?

Some children who have language difficulties may also experience APD. These are some of the differences:

**APD** – Means the child finds it difficult to understand when listening.

**Dyslexia** – Means the child has difficulties with reading and/or spelling. Dyslexia may also include co-ordination difficulties e.g. being a bit clumsy).

**Attention deficit disorder** – Means the child finds it difficult to concentrate.

**Speech and language** – Means the child has difficulties developing and understanding speech and language.

Many of these difficulties can overlap in children.
Symptoms of APD

Difficulties with:

• Understanding when listening
• Expressing themselves clearly using speech
• Reading
• Remembering instructions
• Understanding spoken messages
• Staying focussed

Unfortunately there is no cure for auditory processing difficulties. However, we have included a list of rehabilitation tools on the following pages that will assist your child.
School Environment

- Child should sit near the front of the class to aid lip-reading and visual clues.
- Teacher should be asked to ensure the child is looking and listening when instructions are given out.
- Teacher should check to see if the child has heard/understood.
- Teacher should provide written information which might be used to consolidate verbal instructions.
- Classroom noise should be reduced.
- Listening devices might be provided.

Home environment

- Family could encourage listening exercises.
- Family could check that the child is looking and listening.
- Background noise could be reduced when trying to communicate (turning the TV off).
Activities/Games

The following game activities can be used to help improve your child’s listening skills. Keep the activities short and fun:

- **Listening:** When walking to school or the shops, what sounds can you hear? After the walk, see how many sounds your child can remember hearing.

- **Practice listening to environmental sounds and guessing where they are from, and who or what is making them.**

- **With the child’s eyes closed ask them to identify different noises, e.g. clock ticking, paper rustling etc.**

- **Get your child to imitate your speech sounds, high pitch, low pitch etc.**

- **Clap in rhythmic sequence and then ask your child to imitate the sequence.**

- **Present well known stories, rhymes or songs with one or more parts omitted and the child must supply the missing information.**
Games

- Barrier games are a great language tool; they provide opportunities to develop receptive (understanding) and expressive (speaking) communication skills. In a barrier game, two players sit across from each other with a barrier (just a board will do). Place the barrier so that each player is unable to see the other player’s objects/scene. The directing player, chooses where the scene/objects go. The directing player then gives verbal directions to help the other player set up their set in the same way. The barrier prevents each other from seeing each scene during the game. Each player must be very attentive, patient and clear in their descriptions. Once they feel that their scenes/objects match let them compare.

- Using the barrier method, each child has a Mr Potato head. One child dresses the Mr Potato head and describes to the other child to do the same. The other child listens to the instructions and attempts to do the same. They can then compare them at the end to see if they match.

- Pictionary

- Language games: ‘I went to the shop with grandma and bought a loaf of bread’ The second person says ‘I went to the shop with grandma and bought a loaf of bread and some cheese’ Continue to add and repeat.

- Guess who: Using language to describe the characters.
Games to enhance auditory processing in children

- ‘Simon says’ (vigilance, auditory discrimination, following directions)
- ‘Marco Polo / Blind Man’s Bluff’ (localization and tracking)
- ‘Same and different’ (auditory discrimination)
- Exposure to rhymes and songs (phonological awareness, auditory Discrimination)
- following directions (auditory memory and sequencing) Musical chairs or statues’ (vigilance)

The BBC website (www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/games/shows/tuvwxy) also provides games.

There are also listening and memory games that can be played online or that can be downloaded to use on a phone, tablet or computer.

You can download some listening worksheets from www.schoolsparks.com

Remember the games should be fun!!!!!
References

APDUK, Deafness research UK, BSA auditory processing protocol, date of version 1st August 2011
Tell us what you think

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact Stacey Gurnell, Senior Audiologist, Audiology department, The York hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE or email stacey.gurnell@york.nhs.uk.

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