

# **Auditory Processing Disorder** **Information and Management Strategies**

In general, children with auditory processing disorders benefit from specific “management strategies” – continuity is helpful and so some of these techniques could be implemented both within the educational setting, and at home.

- Seat the child at the front of the class. This helps to keep the teachers’ voice as clear as possible, but also cuts down on the possibility of other distractions – looking out of the window, watching other classmates, moving, chatting etc. It also means that the teacher is more likely to notice if your child’s attention has drifted.
- Gain the child’s attention BEFORE trying to give information or instruction, and try to speak to them face to face.
- Give as many other sensory clues as possible. Visual, tactile and kinaesthetic cues all help to install the information into different memory banks, and reinforce the auditory message.
- Consider installing Sound Field Systems in classrooms. These are proven to assist most children and involve a simple setup of a microphone transmitter (worn by the teacher) and small speakers around the room. This has the benefit of aiding the teacher by helping to prevent voice strain, but also keeps the volume, direction and intensity of speech stable i.e. It improves the speech: noise ratio. If the teacher turns away to the board, their voice and information is not lost to the child. As one in four children suffers from glue ear (in addition to usual congestion and hearing loss caused by colds and hay-fever) a Sound Field System can provide a relatively low cost benefit to many children within the school.
- Keep instructions simple and brief...many children with APD will also display relatively poor auditory memory, and so struggle with complex lists of information. Slightly slowing the pace of speech can be helpful.
- Consider providing handouts from the day’s lessons. This enables the child (and parents) to go over the information again, in their own time. Some children may benefit from personalising the work- cutting up the handouts; colouring in or using shaped boxes to link facts; developing acronyms, rhythms or rhymes to help them remember what they may not have processed on a purely auditory level. It helps if the child has input into the methods used- children are more likely to recall information if they have learnt it in a way that is “real” to them.
- Recognise that a child with APD is likely to become mentally fatigued quite quickly. They are struggling to process information at the speed it is given, especially in background noise, and this can be exhausting and bewildering. In some children, this can contribute towards behavioural problems.
- Consider the role of homework. As mentioned, a child with APD is likely to be tired and therefore have a reduced ability to concentrate by the end of the day; it may be more effective for the child and parent to spend the time using their handouts, then trying to “catch up” by doing some extra work.
- Children with APD seem to benefit from good routine and structure – many parents report that their child can become anxious, angry and distressed if things do not happen when the child expected them to. The school timetable does tend to have a reliable routine; parents may find it helpful to implement a family calendar/ diary/ timetable, so that their child has a clear visual reminder of the home routine.
- Consider a HomeBook, as used by many nurseries and Early Years groups. This enables good communication and liaison between the school and parent, and provides a means for regular progress reports and discussion.