



Let's Talk



Auditory Processing Disorder (APD)



“My son Sam’s teacher worried about him because he was having trouble in class. He wasn’t following directions and mixed up words and sounds on his spelling tests. When the classroom got noisy, he seemed to have even more trouble. I agreed to have some testing done by the school team. We also took him to see an audiologist. The team decided that he had an auditory processing disorder.”

— Ivan

Does Your Child Have an Auditory Processing Disorder?

Your child may hear what is said but not be able to understand it. You may have been told that your child has an auditory processing disorder, or APD. You may also hear this called a central auditory processing disorder, or (C)APD. A child with APD may have problems:

- Understanding speech in noisy places
- Following directions
- Hearing differences between sounds and words
- Knowing where sounds are coming from

There are different types of APD. It can be very hard to know whether a child has APD or if something else is causing his problems. A language disorder or attention problem may be the cause. The only way to know is to have your child seen by a team of professionals. The team may include:

- A hearing specialist, called an audiologist. This person can test your child’s hearing and see how well your child’s brain reacts to sounds.
- A speech-language pathologist, or SLP. The SLP can test your child’s language to see how well he understands, talks, reads, and writes. The SLP can also test how well your child speaks and whether he can be understood.

Fast facts

- It is hard to know if your child has an auditory processing disorder, or APD.
- Children with APD can have trouble in school.
- Speech-language pathologists, or SLPs, can help.

- Your child's teacher, a psychologist, or others.

Together, the team will find out if your child has APD, what type he has, and what can be done to help him.

What Do SLPs Do With Children Who Have APD?

What will help your child depends on the kinds of problems she is having. The SLP can help your child with:

- Following directions
- Understanding what she hears
- Hearing the differences between sounds in words
- Other speech and language problems that she may have

Your child's SLP can also help the teacher in the classroom. Some children with APD do better if they sit near the front of the room so that they can focus on the teacher. Other things that may work are:

- Giving simple directions and repeating them
- Having the child write things down that she needs to remember
- Letting other children help by repeating instructions or writing things down
- Wearing a device that lets her hear the teacher more clearly and drowns out background noise
- Having the child work in a smaller, quieter room

How Can You Help Your Child?

There are things you can do at home to help your child understand what he hears. Here are some tips:

- Turn off the television, music, or other noisy things when your child is trying to do homework, listen, or follow directions.
- Ask your child to look at you when you are talking.
- Use short, simple sentences.
- Talk a little more slowly and say words carefully.
- Have your child repeat back to you any really important things you tell him.

- Write notes, and keep calendars and schedules where your child can use them.
- Allow your child “thinking time” before asking him to respond.

“ Sam is working with an SLP. The SLP is teaching him ways to understand what he hears. Now that his teacher knows Sam has APD, some things have changed in the classroom. He sits near the front and has a friend help him write down his assignments. I find that if I give him short directions at home, he does much better. He’s doing pretty well these days. ”
—Ivan

APD can change a child’s life. Help is available.

To learn more about auditory processing disorder, visit www.asha.org/apd or call 1-800-438-8762. For more information, contact your local hearing loss association.