

What is a Central Auditory Processing Disorder?

- Breakdown in auditory information getting from the ear to the brain, where it is interpreted.
- Affects auditory perception, processing, and memory
- Hearing acuity is normal, but there is often a history of frequent ear infections.

Typically developing children over the age of 7 years, and with normal hearing acuity, may be evaluated to determine if they have a Central Auditory Processing Disorder. Unfortunately, it is not possible to formally test children with multiple disabilities. However, one may make a reasonable assumption that a student with multiple disabilities has a central auditory processing disorder if one or more of the following is demonstrated:

- Difficulty with sound localization – knowing where sounds are coming from
- Frequently requiring repetition of spoken language
- Slow response time
- Easily distracted; appears inattentive
- Overly sensitive to certain sounds
- Impulsive or irritable in a noisy environment
- Difficulty listening when there is background noise; understands better in quiet or in one-on-one situations
- Demonstrates challenging behaviours, such as acting out
- Difficulty following spoken instruction; poor auditory memory
- Difficulty discriminating between words that sound similar (e.g., stamp; stand)
- Difficulty with identifying patterns of sounds
- Difficulty with sequencing different sounds when talking and reading

Strategies:

1. Reduce background noise.
2. Have the student sit close to the teacher, and away from the door or window.
3. Have the student oriented towards you when speaking with him/her.
4. Use simple sentences with lots of expression, but use age appropriate language.

5. Speak at a slightly slower rate, but don't over exaggerate speech.
6. Speak slightly louder than usual, and vary loudness to increase attention.
7. Provide information in a tangible way (i.e., visual and/or tactile). Spoken language is transient and the student may have missed the information. Accompanying the words with something tangible, such as a picture the student can easily see or an object cue, will help the student to better comprehend.
8. Get the child's attention first by physically touching them, getting them to look at you, etc. before you begin giving auditory information.
9. Consider using mild amplification with an FM system when in a noisy classroom. This allows the teacher's voice to be transmitted directly to the student's ear while blocking out background noise.
10. Recognize signs of fatigue, and take breaks, as necessary
11. Consult with your local speech-language pathologist and audiologist



Placing tennis balls on the bottoms of chairs and table legs can help to reduce background noise in the classroom