

Strategies for Supporting Auditory Processing Skills

The term 'auditory processing' refers to how the brain recognises and interprets sound information. Children who have difficulties with their auditory processing skills may benefit from the following strategies:

Modifications to the Environment:

A student with auditory processing difficulties would benefit from the following modifications in the classroom:

A classroom setting with as low level of background noise as possible:

- Reduce background noise within the classroom as much as possible.
- Keep classroom doors closed when possible to reduce noise from busy corridors.

Preferential seating:

- Close to the teacher so the student can hear the teacher's voice clearly and see their face - looking and listening is much more effective than listening alone
- If possible, seat the student between two quiet children who are on task
- Away from sources of noise such as fans, vents, windows, pencil sharpeners
- Away from sources of visual distraction - if a child is visually distracted, less attention will be given to auditory information
- If the audiologist has identified a 'weaker' ear on assessment, seat so that the better ear is favoured

Helpful Teaching Techniques:

Ensure that the student is attending before giving oral directions/ explanations:

Call the student's name and get the child to look at you before you give the instruction.

When speaking:

- Speak in a clear animated voice
- Slow down the rate of speech
- Speak using an appropriate volume
- Speak in short simple sentences with plenty of pauses and repetitions

When giving instructions/directions:

- Provide a purpose for the activity to prepare the student.
- Limit the amount of verbal information given at one time, present in simple steps or chunks e.g. sit down – get your book out.
- Stress the relevant parts of the instruction/explanation by altering your pitch, inflection, rate or volume of your voice.
- Avoid giving instructions when there is a high level of background noise



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While you explain what is being taught, use visual aids to help the student understand.

- Written instructions on the board
- Write key words on the board
- Write examples on the board
- Provide written frameworks for note-taking
- Display models, diagrams, overheads, charts, pictures or real objects
- Provide written notes/instructions beforehand to the student
- Nominate another student to act as note-taker (i.e. Avoid asking the child to listen and write at the same time)
- Use facial expressions and gestures to convey meaning unless they become distracting

The child should be encouraged to use both visual and auditory input to maximise comprehension.

Monitor the message:

- Recognise 'blank' or 'puzzled' looks
- Watch for signs of lack of concentration, understanding or attention
- Watch for signs of fatigue as students with auditory processing difficulties tend to tire more quickly if the activity is language or listening based. Short intensive periods of instruction with regular breaks tend to be much more effective.
- When repetition doesn't work, rephrasing the material often helps
- Ask the student questions or to repeat or paraphrase what has been said
- Encourage the student to ask questions if something is not understood

Let the student know you understand their struggles and are willing to listen and brainstorm about strategies that will help the student manage in the classroom.

Encourage the student to:

- Use gestures, meaning and intelligent guessing to fill in any gaps
- Become an active listener i.e. monitoring and checking their own listening comprehension
- Ask relevant questions to obtain the extra information that they may need e.g. present part of a story with a question. The child is then helped to paraphrase what he has read and identify what extra information he needs to answer the question. The child can then be shown how to use this skill to improve his understanding of what he hears
- Use visual imagery e.g. visualise themselves doing a task as an aid to memory
- Rehearse facts and complex information. Auditory memory is aided by association with rhythm, so facts can be put to simple rhythms and tunes.
- Repeat instructions to themselves.

