

ABOUT AUDITORY PROCESSING DISORDER (APD)



Auditory processing disorder (APD) is a hearing disorder that disrupts how the brain processes sounds. This affects a learner's ability to know where a sound has come from, what it is, and when it happened.

APD can affect language development and learning to read. Learners with APD are generally of average to above average intelligence.

Understanding APD

Auditory processing disorder, also known as central auditory processing disorder, occurs in approximately 5% of learners. APD is when the central auditory pathways of the ear and brain don't work together to support understanding sounds. APD can make understanding speech in noisy environments difficult. APD may occur with a coexisting diagnosis such as dyslexia and reading development delay.

APD is not generally associated with hearing loss and not generally assessed until 7 years of age. However, there are some assessments that will indicate if a learner is at risk for APD.

APD and learning

Learners with APD may have:

- poor attention and related behavioural issues
- learning challenges
- delayed phonological awareness and discrimination
- reading development delays
- difficulty with auditory memory such as following a multiple-step request or holding information in their working memory.

Learners with APD respond well to adjustments and targeted interventions. The main approaches to interventions are:

- using listening devices and support for auditory learning
- specific literacy intervention
- interventions for understanding and learning speech and language.

Explicit teaching of phonological awareness and phonics is crucial in supporting learners with APD. This is the foundation of all literacy learning, especially reading.

Strengths of learners with APD

Learners with APD will bring a broad array of strengths that may include:

- excellent visual learning skills
- creativity
- using visual strategies as part of their communication (particularly Aboriginal learners).



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APD ADJUSTMENTS



No two learners with APD are the same. Their experiences will vary depending on their education, cultural and family influences. Therefore, no single approach will meet the needs of all learners.

EXAMPLES OF ADJUSTMENTS



Environmental adjustments

Consider the classroom acoustics by:

- checking the distance between you and the learner
- being aware that light behind you creates a silhouette making it more difficult for the learner to use visual cues when you are speaking
- having the learner sit closer to the front of the room but off to one side so they can see you and their peers
- reducing visual distractions by only displaying what is needed for teaching and learning
- providing a quiet spot for the learner to complete work.



Teaching adjustments

- Pre-teach vocabulary.
- Read aloud or use audio books to promote literacy and language development.
- Connect with the learner frequently to check their comprehension.
- Provide learning materials prior to the learning so that the learner can pre-read content.
- Allow the learner to have a break from listening in whatever way suits them, for example a walk outside or reading a book. Listening for long periods of time can lead to auditory fatigue.



Active listening adjustments

- Talk facing the learner to increase their visual access to you speaking.
- Speak clearly and make sure your mouth is uncovered. Keep books or notes away from your mouth. Make sure beards and moustaches are trimmed.
- Reduce background noise.
- Use a Soundfield system.