



Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders OAFCCD

Central Auditory Processing Disorders

What is a Central Auditory Processing Disorder (CAPD)?

Some children appear to understand what is said to them in a one-to-one quiet situation but have significant difficulty with listening or comprehending auditorally presented information where there is competing noise. Their hearing sensitivity is normal but they can't focus their attention on verbally presented material. It's that they can't listen not won't listen. It is a physical problem not a behavioural one.

Effects of CAPD:

- The child may not be able to understand the information which is competing with the noise when they are in classroom situations. They have difficulty selectively attending to the message or if it was not heard clearly they may not be able to "fill in" the parts they missed.
- If two messages are presented at once the child may lose both messages or mix them together. The child may become "auditorally exhausted" quickly and not be able to focus for long periods of time.
- Significant central auditory processing difficulties co-occur with academic problems and sometimes difficulty interacting with peers.
- Adaptations of the environment, modifications by the speaker and strategies for the child may aid perception and memory for auditory information.

Environmental Modifications:

- Decrease background or competing noise as this causes a great deal of difficulty for the child's ability to understand what is said. This includes mechanical noises such as dishwashers etc., talking and the radio or TV.
- For school work provide a quiet desk or work space with few distractions. Some children benefit from having ear plugs to reduce the noise.
- Carpet or sound proof the working environment.
- Only allow one person to talk at a time.
- If your child has one better ear, position him so that the better ear is towards the teacher or the speaker.

Speaker Strategies:

- Be sure you have the child's attention before you speak. This can be done by calling their name, saying "listen" or touching them on the shoulder.
- Introduce the topic (e.g.: we are going to talk about our trip on Friday) and then give the details.
- Use gestures and visual cues to aid comprehension.
- Slow your speech rate and pause before important points.
- Use short simple direct commands. If they are long or complicated then break them into smaller parts for easier comprehension.
- Allow extra time for the child to process the question and if they don't understand repeat or rephrase.
- Occasionally check to determine if child comprehended the message.
- Use cued recall to aid comprehension e.g.: sentence completion.

Child /Listener Strategies:

- Face the speaker so the facial expressions and lip movements of the speaker can be seen.
- Make sure the child is not looking into the light (i.e. in front of a window) so that the speaker's face can be seen easily.
- Have the child re-auditorize or repeat the information.
- Teach the child to ask for repetitions or explanations if they don't hear or understand.

Counselling and or discussing the disorder with the child is helpful. They need to understand the problem and the strategies in order to use them appropriately.

Note: OAFCCD recommends that you seek the advice of a Speech - Language Pathologist to get further information and advice that is specific to your child.

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