

# What is auditory processing disorder (APD)?

APD is a difficulty with processing sound usually when hearing acuity is normal. It is characterised by difficulty in separating different streams of sound, recognising and discriminating between sounds, and needing longer to process sound. This results in faulty storage of sound patterns (words), poor word discrimination and problems hearing target speech in even quiet background noise.

Visit the [APD section of the NHS Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children website](#) for more information.

## Key difficulties faced by learners with APD

The above problems can lead to language comprehension difficulties and because of poor storage and sequencing difficulty with aspects of expressive language such as formulating ideas into sentences, vocabulary and word retrieval (because words are stored wrongly). Written language can also be affected because we mediate written language through speech.

In addition, people with auditory processing problems may have processing difficulties in other modalities such as vision and motor. Motor problems may show as clumsiness or retained reflexes which can cause educational difficulties. It is not a stable condition and other problems may appear to emerge over time.

## Strategies to support a pupil with APD

- ✓ Be aware of room acoustics. Rooms with hard surfaces will cause echoes, so rooms with carpets and soft furnishings are best. Switch off any radios or televisions and move away from any noisy devices such as fans.
- ✓ Some pupils may use a radio aid. Please ensure you are wearing the microphone.
- ✓ Repeat or re-phrase when necessary.
- ✓ It helps some pupils if they are sitting at the front of the classroom – this is considered when preparing the seating plan.
- ✓ Give written information as much as possible. This will help consolidate verbal communication and further aid understanding.
- ✓ Be aware when asking pupils to do listening tasks/comprehension. Some pupils with APD will benefit from and be eligible for a live reader in exams.
- ✓ Some pupils with APD will take longer to process and complete a task.

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