



Weill Cornell Medicine

Hearing & Speech Center

Auditory Processing Disorder: A Guide for Parents

What is Auditory Processing Disorder (APD)?

Auditory processing disorder (APD) is a term used to describe listening difficulties that result from dysfunction in the central auditory nervous system (CANS). These difficulties may include:

- Difficulty understanding speech in background noise
- Frequent requests for repetition (saying “huh?” and “what?”)
- Difficulty following verbal directions
- Distractibility or attention concerns
- Difficulty understanding (misinterpreting) sarcasm or jokes

*These, and other common signs of APD, are *not* unique to APD and *should not* be treated as definitive signs that an APD is present.

What should I do if I suspect my child has APD?

You should discuss this and any other concern(s) with your child’s pediatrician. It may be helpful to speak with your child’s educator and ask for their observations, keeping in mind that APD can coexist with other disorders, including language, reading, learning, or attention deficit.

Children 7 years of age or older may be candidates for testing.

What should my child expect during an Auditory Processing Evaluation (APE)?

Your child will be wearing headphones in a soundproof test booth during the auditory processing evaluation (APE) and will be able to communicate with the audiologist throughout the evaluation.

Your child will be listening for sounds, numbers, words, or sentences, presented to one or both ears, in quiet or in background noise. Instructions will be reviewed prior to each test. Any questions your child has will be answered throughout the evaluation, and many opportunities will be given to take short breaks in-between tests.

A full report, including results and recommendations, will be available to you within a few weeks of your appointment.