

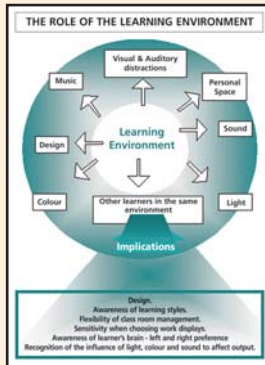
APDUK

Auditory Processing Disorder in the United Kingdom

Newsletter

ISSUE NO 5 • JANUARY 2006

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By Dr. Gavin Reid



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By Damien Howard

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See our special handouts section

www.apduk.org

New year, new hope

An increasing number of UK parents have been ringing me and emailing with the most horrific tales of how they and their children have been treated - fobbed off, patronised, obstructed and summarily dismissed whilst trying to get an APD diagnosis. This has to stop.

These accounts often leave me in tears, despite being deemed a hardened campaigner of 3 years with a skin thicker than a rhinoceros, thicker in fact than I ever thought I would need! I can relate to their pain, anger and frustration from experiences of my own although at the same time I also have to remind them that things are so much better now than they were three years ago when APDUK was first formed and APD was unheard of in the UK.

At last there is a light at the end of the tunnel; it seems that finally there is hope, because I also receive calls and messages from those that have already been given an APD diagnosis, (albeit before the new UK tests are ready). But they are bittersweet victories because these parents are still left with no professional support in dealing with a condition that nobody is yet prepared to deal with; like the lady who rang me after being told her child had APD, who was left reeling and given the official Medical Research Council Institute of hearing research (MRC/IHR) APD pamphlet prepared in conjunction with APDUK, then simply sent away home with no suggestions of what she or the school could do for her child.

Diagnosis?

In as much as it is good to finally get a diagnosis (and validation that you haven't

imagined it), being told after years of searching that there is something wrong with your child, but given no explanation or help, means very little in real terms. It can be a shock even if you are expecting it, but to go through all that and be left with nothing to help your child is almost worse.

Because of this, until all the education and other UK professionals are trained and ready to do so, on behalf of APDUK I have provided handouts to cover all eventualities, one for children and one for parents that explain about APD and how to help; one for adults and also one for schools and colleges (written in conjunction with Graeme Wadlow, currently APDUK vice chair) with the accommodations they can provide. At least then no child will be left to struggle alone for longer than necessary. Please print them off, use them and pass them on. They are at the end of issue 4 of our newsletter and also here: www.lacewingmultimedia.com/APD.htm

Experts and screening

I have had disturbing phone calls and emails about people claiming to be experts in APD and qualified to test for APD and who charge large sums of money for therapies they have devised to help APD. Please avoid these people, no matter how appealing their claims. We need standardised testing and accommodations for APD in the UK and advice should only be sought from APDUK and the Medical Research Council Institute of Hearing Research. If you are unsure, please contact us to verify their suitability - we are working together to ensure that the right sort of help will be available to all. Therapies that are not

Continued on page 2

APDUK Mission Statement

We aim to raise awareness and recognition of Auditory Processing Disorder as a disability, through educating both professionals and the public.

We aim to support research into APD, which will enable good diagnosis and treatment to be developed. We also support individual sufferers and parents/carers of individual sufferers, through self-help networks and internet forums.

New year, new hope...

Continued from page 1

suitable for your child's type of APD, which can only be determined by the appropriate testing, will not work and might even be harmful. We have a scenario developing whereby people are jumping on the APD bandwagon, which to me is shameful. We all want a quick answer and help now, but it is better to wait than to be taken in by false hope.

We are also very concerned that there are some people in the UK developing their own screening material for APD - lists etc. to decide if a child should be referred. This is not something we would encourage, as so many children can then easily be missed and not referred if they do not fit the criteria on those particular screening tests. We have several members of APDUK whose children have been told they do not qualify for APD testing and have turned out to be indeed severely affected. Only the MRC/IHR screening test should be used as a benchmark for suitability for testing. Anyone suspected of having APD must be referred on ... regardless of what other screening may tell you. APD is not a simple condition, it is a very complex and wide reaching disability with effects that are so numerous that a child with one or two that do not happen to be on someone's checklist may be dismissed as not having APD, not having any problem or worse, misdiagnosed as autism or ADHD. Our checklists can give you an idea of what to look for but this by no means a professional or exhaustive list so, if in doubt, refer.

What to do

APDUK feel that all children suspected of APD warrant referral and immediate help.

1. Your first step should be to ask your family GP to refer you to the local hospital audiology department for a full screening to rule out hearing loss.

2. From there ask to be referred on to a suitably qualified specialist to test for APD. Even if hearing loss is present APD can exist in those with good hearing and without. As in most places this is not available yet, get your hospital audiologist to note your request and WAIT till testing is available.

3. All children suspected of APD should be noted by SENCOs as "awaiting testing" and support should be provided even

before diagnosis because these children need help NOW. Ask your school to do this and to use our tips for schools/colleges. www.lacewingmultimedia.com/APD.htm

How to help

In the UK there is still much ignorance about APD. That has to change and one way we can change it is by publicising APD as widely as we can.

If you want to help, PLEASE print off the poster and indicators sheet at the end of this newsletter and pass them around to anyone and everyone that you feel needs to know- schools, your school's head, SENCO and the school governor

My New Year's resolution is to try to make ignorance about APD a thing of the past but I need your help

with a responsibility for special educational needs (every school has one) GPs and hospitals, education departments, parent partnerships, LEA special needs support services, health visitors and social services departments, local voluntary groups offices and your local MP. Then they will all know about APD and can help us to ensure that all children with suspected APD get support immediately.

Professionals

I have come across many professionals - primarily teachers and SENCOs - who dearly want to help but are tied by the lack of guidelines, checklists and protocols on how to seek diagnosis and support for a child that they suspect has APD. These are issues that need to be dealt with and will be dealt with as soon as testing is widely available in the UK, ideally via a multi-disciplinary approach encompassing all agencies that are involved in the care, education and support of children with special needs, in conjunction with the MRC/IHR and

APDUK. Until that time, schools etc. should look to the MRC/IHR pamphlet for guidance but I have also included a checklist at the end of this newsletter to show what indicators of APD could be present and that they could look out for. http://www.infosheets.apduk.org/mrc_apd.htm

If you are such a professional, please pass on the information at the end of the newsletter and the handouts for schools / colleges here www.lacewingmultimedia.com/APD.htm

I have been told that the tips we recommend are nothing more than good practice, but the fact that so many schools do not already use them shows that there is a great need for them in all schools. They have been used in schools all over the world and will benefit all children, but none more so that the child with APD.

Help APDUK

APD is by nature an invisible disability, but one that now needs to be seen. We need to make it known so that nobody can escape their responsibility and no child or adult with APD will be missed. The time is right to get to work and inform the UK.

My New Year's resolution is to try to make ignorance about APD a thing of the past but I need your help.

You can do this in any or all of these 5 simple ways.

- Join the voluntary organisation APDUK and add your name to the list of people who say no to ignorance (a membership form can be found at the end of the newsletter).
- Donate to our funds, however small the sum, to help us expand our campaign of publicising APD and reach more people. APDUK are unpaid volunteers with no income to cover costs apart from nominal membership fees and donations.
- Set up local ADUK parent groups so that parents and children can support each other (we are setting up a help pack for local groups, soon to be available from the website; contact olanys@aol.com for details).
- Print and hand out our information sheets and posters to all who need to see them.
- Buy one of our badges or T-shirts (available soon) and wear it with pride!

On behalf of APDUK I wish everyone a happy 2006. Let this be the year that we are heard and understood.

Aly, Chair APDUK ©

www.lacewingmultimedia.com/APD.htm

WELCOME TO ISSUE NO.5

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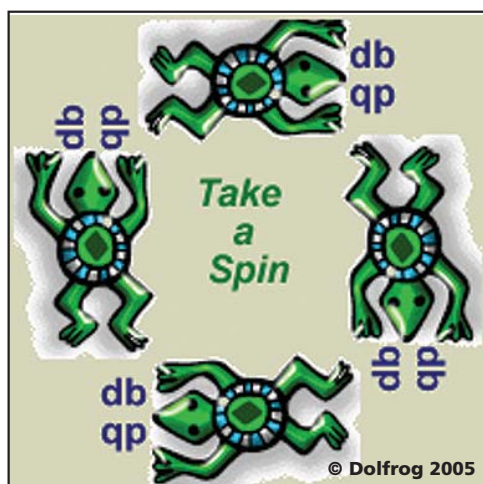
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We need YOU...

If you have any time to spare, please join up to APDUK and contact me to volunteer. You may not think you have the necessary skills to work on the committee of a voluntary organisation but everyone has vital talents that can help.

Whatever your background, work or life experiences, all you need is a genuine interest in supporting those with APD and a willingness to help.

Come along to a chat and meet us (you will just need to contact me to register first)... or just email, phone or write to us with any comments or queries. Thank you!

Aly olanys@aol.com

APDUK is a non-profit voluntary organisation run by unpaid volunteer parents. Our only monetary support for running costs comes from membership subscriptions and kind donations. We are currently seeking charity status and in order to do this we need to raise more funds and membership support. This will enable us to continue and extend our work in helping those with Auditory Processing Disorder in the UK.

Please donate what you can
www.lacewingmultimedia.com/APD.htm buy books, CDs, DVDs, games or other gifts from Amazon via our books pages (at no extra cost)
<http://www.books.apduk.org/>
or join us
<http://www.members.apduk.org/>
to make APDUK even more successful in helping those with Auditory Processing Disorder in the United Kingdom.

Thank you for your continued support.

"Silence is not just Golden; Silence is Crucial."

Nina Robertson

APDUK Newsletter Downloads

So far we have had the following UK and international downloads of our newsletters, available here:

<http://www.infosheets.apduk.org/newsletter.htm>

Issue 1	3076
Issue 2	2189
Issue 3	1201
Issue 4	4146

Total 10,612

Not bad in just over a year!



Contact information

Website: www.apduk.org, www.apduk.org/info.htm
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Progress report on developments in APD

This is a brief update report on the MRC Institute of Hearing Research's project to develop a diagnostic test battery for APD.

Children taking part in this study will be drawn from primary schools, aged 6-12 years, and have no measurable ear or hearing problems, and The British Society of Audiology's APD Special Interest Group

1. MRC Institute of Hearing Research diagnostic test battery

This work is known as the Children's Auditory Processing Evaluation (CAPE) Study. The CAPE test battery consists of (a) audiometric tests to check the children's ears and hearing, (b) psychoacoustic tests to check their auditory processing ability, and (c) cognitive and language tests to check their general ability. There are three main phases and one subsidiary phase to this work:

The First Phase. This aimed to assess the most effective methods for obtaining reliable and valid auditory processing data. This work was carried out with children from local primary schools.

The Second Phase. This part of the study aims to reduce the very large initial set of tests down to a more manageable number. We will do this by checking which of the selected tests are the more appropriate for obtaining reliable and valid data. To be sure we have enough information, it is necessary to run the entire set of tests with 60 children. Again, the work will be carried out with children from local primary schools.

The Third Phase. This part of the study aims to use the reduced test battery with a very large number of children drawn from the UK. The data from this phase will tell us how well children of a given age perform on each of the tests. The data will provide the reference points by which we can check the performance of children suspected of having APD.

The Subsidiary Phase. This part of the study aims to check if the auditory processing tests from the CAPE battery can be used with younger children. This work will be carried out with 60 children from local nurseries who are 3_ to 5 years of age.

The project is progressing well. The First Phase was completed early in 2005. We have collected all the data for the Second Phase. The initial analysis has been conducted and some of the less effective tests eliminated. The data are now undergoing further analysis to ensure we end up with a small but highly effective set of tests to form the diagnostic battery. Planning is well underway for the Third Phase of this study. The Subsidiary Phase started late 2005. It is envisaged that the data collection for this phase will be completed by Summer 2006.

2. BSA APD Special Interest Group

The UK Steering Committee comprises 12 members who represent a broad range of relevant disciplines such as

audiology and speech language therapy. The current chair is Sally Hind (Developmental Psychologist, Institute of Hearing Research), and the vice chair is Doris-Eva Bamiou (Consultant in Neuro-otology, National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery).

Groups: Regional APD groups have been formed in Wales, Scotland and Ireland. The Regional and UK groups liaise with one another to keep each informed of current work and progress.

Informing others: The UK Steering Committee produce a Newsletter twice yearly which is published on the APD webpage on the BSA website <http://www.thebsa.org.uk> The newsletter is aimed at interested professionals but is accessible to the general public and provides an overview of the committee's current work.

The UK Steering Committee organised two national meetings for professionals in the field. The First was held in June and aimed to provide an update of the work conducted by the UK Steering Group and the MRC Institute of Hearing Research. The second meeting was held in September. This meeting aimed to provide an overview of different approaches to the assessment of APD by having presentations from a UK (Professor David Moore, MRC Institute of Hearing Research) and an American (Professor Charles Berlin, New Orleans) speaker. Both meetings were well attended, and well received.

The committee intend to organise further meetings and professional training events in 2006.

Work completed recently: A survey of the service care pathway for APD was conducted with Audiologists and Speech Language Therapists. The report of this survey has been submitted to the journal Audiological Medicine for possible inclusion in their special issue on Auditory Processing Disorder due to be printed in Spring 2006. The survey has highlighted the need for further professional awareness training. An overview of the survey report will be presented in the next Steering Committee Newsletter due early 2006.

Work in progress: MRC Institute of Hearing Research is updating their adult information leaflet on Obscure Auditory Dysfunction (OAD). The term OAD needs to be replaced with the more commonly accepted expression – APD.

Sally Hind, January 2006

Learning styles in the classroom: The feel good factor

Dr. Gavin Reid
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Why are Learning Styles Important?

It is important that students are aware of their learning styles as learning styles can be an important determinant of successful learning. It is therefore surprising that recognition of learning styles is not seen as perhaps as high a priority as it should, in the development of curricular materials. In the process of curriculum development there is usually considerable emphasis on content, outcomes and literacy attainment, but often the means and methods to deliver the content and the range of the students' learning styles are overlooked. Learners feel good when they are able to access their own learning style.

3 key points in this article

1. The role of the learning process
2. The role of the learning environment
3. Observation of learning styles in the classroom

1. The role of learning

The information processing cycle is important because children with Auditory Processing Difficulties can encounter barriers at all stages of information processing.

Learning is a process and it is important to see the student as an individual learner and to assess precisely what the barriers to learning are for that particular student, irrespective of the label he/she may or may not have.

The stages of the information

processing cycle can relate to input, cognition and output. The difficulties students can experience can be anticipated and effort can be made in the development and presentation of materials to minimise these potential difficulties. Some suggestions are shown below.

INPUT

- Acknowledge the students preferred learning style - visual, auditory, kinesthetic or tactile,
- take time to consider the impact and influence of the learning environment,
- present information in small steps,
- ensure that over learning is built into the units of work, this should be varied using a range of materials,
- often children with specific difficulties may prefer to use a global learning styles, this means they will need an overview of the whole topic before starting.

COGNITION

- encourage organisational strategies, this means that the new material to be learned should be organised into meaningful chunks or categories at each of the stages of the information processing stages,
- relate all information to the students previous knowledge and experience to ensure that concepts are clear and the information can be placed into a learning framework or schema familiar to the learner,
- help the learner identify specific memory strategies such as mind mapping and mnemonics that they are comfortable using.

OUTPUT

- encourage the use of headings and sub headings in written work as this helps to provide a structure,
- encourage the use of summaries in order to identify the key points,
- provide the key words as a guide to developing a written piece,
- accept a response in different modes apart from the written mode, such as poetry, drama, orally, group collaboration and visually.

2. The role of the learning environment

The learning environment is perhaps one of the most underrated features in the learning process. Environmental factors contribute to the learning experience a great deal and can significantly increase or decrease the effectiveness of learning. Many learners are not aware of this and often just accept the environment as it is, without making any attempt to manipulate it in any way. In some instances it can be difficult to make a choice, or to change the environment. But this is not always the case and if learners are aware of their environmental preferences then at least they are in a position to make informed choices when they do have some flexibility over learning. In most cases, certainly for younger learners, the learning environment refers to the classroom, but it can in fact refer to the other areas that are used for learning, such as the library and home study. The environment is very influential and should be seen as an important resource that can help access effective learning for all students and can make learners 'feel good' about learning.

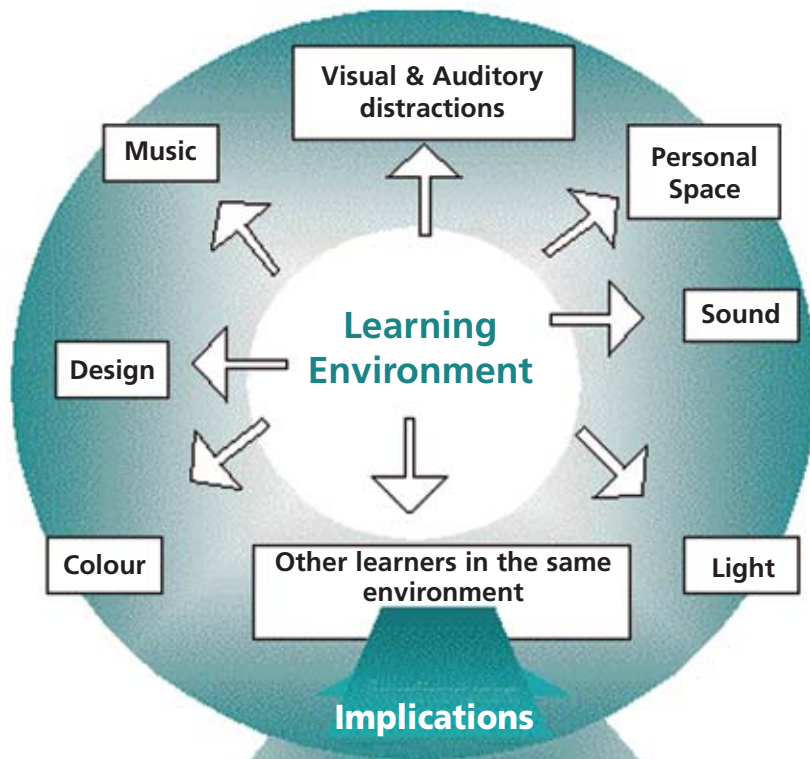
KEY ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

There are a number of factors that need to be considered in relation to the learning environment. These include the following:

- design,
- colour,
- wall displays,
- light,
- sound,
- the position of desks and chairs
- visual and auditory distractions,
- space and
- the presence of other learners in the same environment.

There is substantial literature which supports the importance of the learning environment for accounting for performances in examinations as well as other factors such as school attendance, motivation and skills in inquiry (Reid 2005). This indicates that the learning environment is crucial, particularly in

THE ROLE OF THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT



Design.
 Awareness of learning styles.
 Flexibility of class room management.
 Sensitivity when choosing work displays.
 Awareness of learner's brain - left and right preference
 Recognition of the influence of light, colour and sound to affect output.

relation to learners who may have difficulties in acclimatising to different teaching styles, and indeed in the case of children with APD to auditory based learning.

Environmental factors relating to learning styles should in fact be an influential factor in a school's daily practices, its policy and philosophy. In order for learning styles to be effectively implemented it should be seen not at the individual teacher level but at a whole school level, including the learning environment. Classrooms therefore need to be designed or re-designed with learning styles in mind. For example it may be necessary to re-design desks or to provide students with a choice of desk or study styles. Music for example can also be used to generate a relaxed and creative learning environment (see Reid 2005).

3. Observing learning styles

It is important to develop a framework to observe the learners' behaviours with different tasks. An example of such a framework is shown below (adapted from Reid 2005)

EMOTIONAL

Motivation;

- What topics, tasks and activities interest the child?
- What kind of prompting and cueing is necessary to increase motivation?
- What kind of incentives motivate the child – leadership opportunities, working with others, free time or physical activity?

Persistence;

- Does the child stick to a task until completion without breaks?
- Are frequent breaks necessary when

working on difficult tasks?

Responsibility

- To what extent does the child take responsibility for his/her own learning?
- Does the child attribute success or failure to self or others?

Structure

- Are the child's personal effects - desk, clothing, materials well organised or cluttered?
- How does the child respond to someone imposing organisational structure on him/her?

Social Interaction

- When is the child's best work accomplished – when working alone, with one another or in a small group?
- Does the child ask for approval or needs to have work checked frequently?

Communication

- Does the child give the main events and gloss over the details?
- Does the child interrupt others when they are talking?

COGNITIVE

Modality preference

- What type of instructions does the child most easily understand- written, oral or visual?
- Does the child respond more quickly and easily to questions about stories heard or read?
- Sequential or Simultaneous learning
- Does the child begin with one step and proceed in an orderly fashion or have difficulty following sequential information?
- Is there a logical sequence to the child's explanations or do her/his thoughts bounce around from one idea to another?
- Impulsive / reflective
- Are the child's responses rapid and spontaneous or delayed and reflective?



Working on their own is important for some children

- Does the child seem to consider past events before taking action?

PHYSICAL

Mobility

- Does the child move around the class frequently or fidget when seated?
- Does the child like to stand or walk while learning something new?

Time of day

- During which time of day is the child most alert?
- Is there a noticeable difference between morning work completed and afternoon work?

Sound

- Does the child seek out places that are particularly quiet?

Light

- Does the child like to work in dimly lit areas or say that the light is too bright?

Temperature

- Does the child leave his/her coat on when others seem warm?

Furniture Design

- When given a choice does the child sit on the floor, lie down, or sit in a straight chair to read?

Metacognition

- Is the child aware of his/her learning style strengths?
- Does the child demonstrate self-assessment

Summary

The key points in this article emphasise that acknowledging the child's learning style needs to be considered in the planning and preparation of materials as well as in the actual teaching. Further it highlights that the learning environment can contribute a great deal to the learning experience and it is important to ensure that the learner has the feel good factor when engaged in learning. It is this that will determine the outcome of the learning experience for the child.

The experience of learning may be more important to many children than the actual finished product. At the same time it is important that children, themselves become aware of their own learning style. This is the first and most important step to achieving a degree of self-sufficiency in learning. Acknowledging learning styles can help to promote skills that extend beyond school, as knowledge of learning styles can equip all students for lifelong learning.

REFERENCE

Reid, G. (2005) Learning Styles and Inclusion Paul Chapman Publishers.



Dr. Gavin Reid (www.gavinreid.co.uk) is senior lecturer University of Edinburgh, director and consultant of the Red Rose School for children with Specific Learning Difficulties (www.redroseschool.co.uk) and consultant to Learning Works International (www.learning-works.org.uk)

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Starting the school year on the right foot

By Denise Vignola ©

The first day of school is very important for a child with Auditory Processing Disorder. First impressions and anxieties can carry through the entire school year. For this reason, it is best to start out on the right foot and to take steps to reduce his stress on that first day. There are many things you can do as a parent and teacher to help this transition go smoothly.

Introduction to the Classroom

Introducing the APD child to his/her next classroom can make transitioning to the new environment much easier. He can visit the new classroom prior to the end of the current school year, sitting in with the class for a short time during the last week or two before school ends, or just running an errand to that classroom. Some schools will have transitioning services already in place, and if so, it will be helpful for you to know which days your child will be visiting so you can talk about it that evening.

You can set up some time with the teacher to visit before the start of the new year. Teachers are usually in their classrooms setting up in the weeks before school starts. This time can be used for a non-threatening introduction to the new teacher, for exploring the new environment, and for being shown where various places are in the school or classroom (such as student's desk, boys/girls lavatory, the lunch room, and office).

Information From Teachers

Be sure to ask the current teacher to write down strategies or modifications he/she uses with your child in the classroom that might not be listed on the IEP. You can include this in your packet, which will be discussed later.

The new teacher can help your APD child by providing information on the classroom rules and procedures. Every teacher has their own way of doing things, and their own phrases for signaling changes or rules. If you have a list of these,

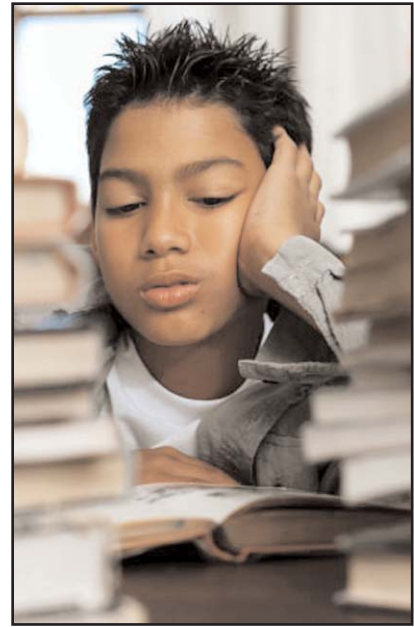
you can introduce your child to these phrases, role play classroom procedures, and start incorporating the classroom language at home so your child has real-life experience responding in a timely way. For example, some teachers will announce "Two minutes!" meaning that there is only 2 minutes left before the end of an activity. If you practice this at home, your child will know what it means, will have experience reacting to these words, and you will also find out if perhaps your child needs to have the announcement given directly to him/her because he doesn't react to/hear general announcements given to the entire class. Also, it will save time for the teacher at school, and your child will not need to try to learn during the confusion and noise of the moment. There will be less chance of mistaking confusion on the student's part for lack of compliance.

Information From Parents

Parents can assist new teachers by preparing a packet of information on their child. In this packet, you will want to include one or two short articles on APD, notes from the last teacher, a copy of your child's IEP (sometimes teachers are not given the IEP prior to the start of the school year), and information specific to your child. This information should include the following:

- Current interests of your child
- Skills your child has been working on during the summer
- List any outside therapies you wish the teacher to know about, asking that any concerns with these areas be conveyed to you so you can discuss it with your therapist
- A list of your child's strengths
- A list of your child's weaknesses
- A description of any behavioral management strategies that work, and those that have been tried and had negative results

Include any examples you have to better illustrate your meaning, and try to keep



the length to a minimum. Be sure to include your telephone number and e-mail address, and convey your willingness to assist and be involved in your child's success at school. Open communication during the school year is to be encouraged. If your child finds school to be threatening in any way, talking about problems outside of that environment will be better received. Ask the teacher how they wish to communicate with you. You can use a notebook, telephone, communicate through e-mails, or even speak face to face throughout the week if you pick your child up from school.

Take this packet with you when you visit the new classroom, or at the least send it to the school a couple weeks prior to the start date, care of the teacher's name. Include a short note as to why you are sending the information and ask that the teacher contact you with any questions.

Summary

Introducing your child to the new classroom prior to the start of the school year and consistent communication between home and school can have a very positive effect on your child's success. It can make the difference between a good year and one riddled with problems. The student will be dealing with the anxiety of a new teacher, new peers, a new set of rules, and perhaps even a new school. A little time taken by teachers and parents can save a lot of heartache later on.

Denise has a son with Auditory Processing Disorder and Semantic Pragmatic Disorder. She is also owner of the internationally acclaimed US SPD website and forum and has experience as an elementary school Teaching Assistant

An APD student in an auditory-sequential world

Prepared by a parent for her "schoolboy" son's teachers

By Debbie Westphal Swander ©

BACKGROUND

Schoolboy is twice-exceptional. Schoolboy's intelligence enables him to handle the content of school; Schoolboy's APD disability makes it difficult for him to handle the process of school.

Schoolboy's strengths and weakness are uneven and vary throughout the day/week/year.

Schoolboy needs a predictable, consistent environment.

Schoolboy is a kinesthetic learner; he does best with hands-on and participatory activities

Schoolboy requires extra time to process what others do more quickly

Schoolboy compensates for his APD by watching and guiding off of other students' behavior

Schoolboy needs parental support at home to achieve the expectations at school.

FOR AN APD STUDENT, SPOKEN CONTENT AND DIRECTIONS ARE "DEGRADED SIGNALS"

Much of the school day is spent

receiving spoken content and instructions

For APD students these "degraded signals" then need to be processed, stored, and recalled

Imagine wearing earmuffs all day

Imagine school with everything spoken in Italian and written in English

APD AFFECTS A STUDENT'S ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS

Getting materials into and out of a locker in the noisy rush before and after school

Remembering at the beginning of the day what needs to be taken to class or turned in

"Hearing," understanding, recalling instructions, due dates, modifications

Remembering at the end of the day what to bring home

HOW APD MAKES DOING HOMEWORK DIFFICULT

At home, Schoolboy doesn't have students to watch or a teacher to ask Schoolboy is almost totally dependent on complete, detailed, accurate, written instructions

Schoolboy is mentally exhausted at the

end of a day of auditory overload and needs time to refuel

HOW SCHOOLBOY'S MOM CAN HELP SCHOOLBOY SUCCEED AT SCHOOL

Make sure Schoolboy does the homework and assignments for his classes Keep track of assignments and grades as an indication of Schoolboy's progress.

Get updates on any class work or assignments that are missing.

Have a way to ask questions of Schoolboy's teachers, his associate, and/or his special ed teacher, and get a timely response.

PARENT'S OBJECTIVES FOR SCHOOL

Accept Schoolboy as a unique student Recognize that the parents of a unique student will need to advocate for their child in a manner different from that of the parents of children in the middle of the bell curve

Work realistically with Schoolboy's strengths and weaknesses

Create an efficient system with reduced stress and time for all

Gradually "wean" Schoolboy from supports once the adults have developed a system that works

Face APD with hope - you can cope!

Nothing is predestined: The obstacles of your past can become the gateways that lead to new beginnings.

Ralph Blum

Go confidently in the direction of your dreams.

Live the life you have imagined.

Henry David Thoreau

Success is not to be measured by the position someone has reached in life, but the obstacles he has overcome while trying to succeed.

Booker T. Washington

Energy and persistence conquer all things.

Benjamin Franklin

It does not matter how slowly you go so long as you do not stop.

Confucius

The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.

Lao Tzu

Use the talents you possess, for the woods would be silent, if no birds sang except the best.

Unknown

No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.

Eleanor Roosevelt

There are two types of people who will tell you that you cannot make a difference in this world: Those who are afraid to try and those who are afraid you will succeed.

Ray Goforth

The harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph.

Unknown

HOMEWORK- is it relevant, accessible and differentiated?

Homework can be a nightmare for those with additional/special needs, especially those that have processing issues, (such as APD, Irlen Syndrome/ scotopic sensitivity and visual perceptual problems) and those with short term memory problems, writing and planning problems, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, dyspraxia, and attention deficits and any other “dyslexia-type” issues. These children can be totally exhausted by the time they get home from school; this is because it is so much harder for them to do the work that others manage easily and homework can be the straw that broke the camel's back. Bright/able/gifted children often suffer too, being set extra work or extended work after much of the same at school and those with dual exceptionalities (bright/able/gifted with learning difficulties) often fall into the same trap if their difficulties are not addressed. I'm sure these aren't the only children affected but these are ones in my area of experience.

After school these children are often sensorily overloaded, stressed,

them and needs to be differentiated or more support given or the child ends up being punished by missing essential free time.

Home life...

Unnecessary amounts of homework cause avoidable anguish to many children, most particularly those with special educational needs. This misery often carries over into family life as it also puts added pressure on families to insist they complete their homework in order to help them achieve- often not realising that doing so is damaging to the child and also to the parent/child relationship. Tears, tantrums, sulking and defiance are a common reaction as well as avoidance and lies. Homework that takes an unaffected child half an hour might take them two, which, apart from the unnecessary effort it takes them at the end of a busy school day, also leaves less room for families to just spend time together. There is nothing worse than having to force a child who is already failing to do more of the same in the sanctuary of their own home. The

exhausted child may lie awake half the night worrying if they have not been able to complete homework. Or, as seen especially in older pupils, some would rather accept the punishment and appear defiant just to save face to their peers and even to teachers and not have to admit they couldn't do the work. This also adds to their feelings of low self-esteem and compounds their failure. Parents are often then called in to school and asked why little Johnny hasn't done his homework, so the poor child may well get punished at home too because parents feel that what the schools say is gospel and there begins a downward spiral of disaffection. If you find that homework is benefiting your child then encourage them to do what they can as best they can in a quiet and calm environment that suits the way they learn. But if not, then this situation of imposing added distress on an already overloaded child has to stop. Ask the school to make your child's homework relevant, accessible and differentiated.

IEP/Statements...

IEP/Statement targets should not be routinely included in homework. They should be worked on at school with the appropriately trained member/s of staff that are usually named on their IEP/Statement. This is not a parent's responsibility. If there is no time at school to do this, then parents need to contact the SENCo by phone or email to ask why this is not being done at school. Sometimes tasks such as listening to a child read may be included as an IEP target, but this is something that individual parents need to discuss with the school if they feel this is not something they would agree to.

Incidentally if you, as a parent, do not have a list of your child's IEP targets, please ask the school for one, as you are entitled to have one. Make sure that wherever possible they have named persons on them who will help your child achieve the targets set and also check that they state how they will do this. An IEP is not just a record of what is expected of a child but also how the school and outside agencies (where appropriate) will help them achieve

“When a child is so tired that they are just unable to do any more, forcing them to do homework that is too hard for them and which they do not understand will not benefit the child in any way. ”

distressed and exhausted, so they need time to unwind and relax in a calm and quiet refuge from schoolwork in order to recharge their energy and also allow vital time for the brain to process what they have learned at school so they can be ready for the next day. They cannot do this if they are working till bedtime.

As much as some schools try to help with homework, why should children who have SEN and struggle to get through the day have to give up their lunchtimes, come early or stay late to do work that is unnecessary and inappropriate? Also inappropriate is the practice of keeping a child who struggles in lunchtime and break times to complete work, something of which too many schools are also guilty. If a child is unable to finish the work in the time allocated then it is too hard for

parent becomes the oppressor, the “bad guy” and the trust the child has for them is gradually worn away. Children often feel that a parent should protect them from the misery they feel at school and that home is the only safe haven they have. Soon nowhere is safe. What is this needless extra work and pressure doing to our children and to family life? I expect many of you reading this will know this situation only too well.

When a child is so tired that they are just unable to do any more, forcing them to do homework that is too hard for them and which they do not understand will not benefit the child in any way. Often parents unwillingly push their child to do so for fear they will get into trouble at school, which many do, with the resulting punishments and loss of privileges etc, and the already

them -if they could do it alone, they would not need an IEP! You also have the right to be present at any IEP/Statement reviews and your views (and those of your child if of an appropriate age to make such decisions) must- according to the Special Needs Code of Practice- be taken into account. You can take an advocate, family member or a friend with you if needed. If you are unable to attend they must re-arrange a date that suits you, if you wish to be present, so let them know in writing if you do wish to be there and the date is unsuitable- and keep a copy.

If your child struggles with homework, let the school know as soon as possible. It is unfair to your child and to you for this situation to continue. If homework is an issue for your child then it must be addressed by the school. Many schools include doing homework as part of their school rules, adopting it as compulsory like uniform and often as a way of ensuring they complete the curriculum. Your child's education should be provided at school as much as possible although they will need to develop study skills and ultimately independent learning. For some children with processing issues, in my view and that of many, the time would be better used resting and recovering from their day and learning and practising study skills in a calm and relaxed environment with no pressure and minimal worksheets to complete. The DfES guideline makes no reference to SEN at all; it does say in section 2 that homework "need not and should not" interfere with social activities or outside interests, which for many children with SEN it does, as they have little time left to do anything else. See <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/homework/intro.pdf>.

Remedial programs and CD-roms etc. should also be undertaken at school when the child is fresh and alert, not at home at the end of the day when the child is already tired and the gains that might be made will be negligible and add more pressure to the child and family in ensuring it is done. This does not help any child. If your child is undergoing remediation of this kind, make sure it is included in their IEP/Statement that it is to be completed at school at a time when it will benefit them most.

Teachers can help...

For children with special/additional needs, homework for homework's sake should be avoided at all costs and if it is deemed essential then it should be kept



to a level appropriate to the child. Homework for children with SEN must be relevant, accessible and differentiated. If you are a teacher, please think very carefully about what you set as homework. Decide whether the homework is really necessary or if you are setting it because homework is traditionally required at your school. If the latter is true, question the policy and help schools to make it applicable for children with SEN.

Homework should not be in place of what has not been taught at school due to time restraints. Determine whether the homework is relevant to what is being studied at that time - do not set work on topics they do not already know as new topics set as homework will invariably not be understood without prior teaching. Don't set IEP/statement targets or remedial tasks/programs as homework. This should be done at school so that it can be delivered by appropriately trained personnel. Don't just set the whole class the same homework without thought as to how it will affect those with special/additional needs. Ask yourself whether the homework will benefit each child according to their needs or if it will make things harder for them/complicate understanding. Make the tasks multi-sensory, if possible, to reinforce what has been done at school.

Send clear notes home so that parents can repeat them to help if the child needs explanation on how to

proceed. (It could be that work is set on a topic that has not been understood by the child at school. If the child does not understand, the parents should not then force them to do that piece of homework, as for them it will be meaningless). Encourage parents to tell you if the child has struggled - the child may not want to admit it to a teacher or in front of peers and will often take punishment to save face rather than say they have not understood. Give each child a home/school diary for parents to log areas of difficulty and parents' comments.

If a child continually struggles with written homework, please consider whether to reduce it or replace with other types of reinforcement and over-learning or study skills. Or in place of class homework send home information for pre-teaching new vocabulary and concepts. This for many may work better as "pre- taught" reinforcement instead of "after-teaching" homework. Children with APD particularly need time to absorb new concepts and if this is done before they are introduced in class it will help enormously. Provide handouts whenever possible and allow the child to keep them and refer to this information in class when the topic is covered, instead of expecting them to take unnecessary dictation, which should always be avoided as it serves no real purpose when pre-printed handouts can easily be given to all that need them. This should not be

accompanied with worksheets or tasks. Homework time for some children might well be better spent in developing study skills, another thing that pupils with special/additional needs find very difficult.

Always make homework SMART like an IEP target...Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time bound (allowing that it may take these children at least twice as long to complete tasks as other children, so instead of making them work for a longer time, set less and expect less and you will increase the quality of work produced). Always strive to avoid putting a child with special/additional needs in a position of failure. Allow the use of a word processor and/or diagrams/flowcharts for those that find planning/writing work difficult. Provide pre-printed tables and planning diagrams for them to fill in wherever possible. Provide pre-printed cloze procedures in place of comprehensions where applicable and do not set unnecessary copying of vast amounts of text. Spelling words, if they must be

given, should be no more than 5 and should be linked by a particular spelling rule/theme, not just random disassociated words.

Please don't give bright/able/gifted children more work than other children or extended work as homework; this is not fair and they need to relax and have a life outside school too or they may burn out and become disaffected. Alternative/differentiated work is just as essential for them too if they need to be educationally stimulated. But don't just assume that they do – in all cases, look to the child.

If implemented according to the child's needs and abilities, homework can aid in the development of independent learning and study skills. Some examples of good practice can be found here. http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/homework/index_more/

BUT if a child is genuinely distressed by the homework that is set, please reconsider whether it BENEFITS the child. That should be the defining factor. Please think again about what you set and make sure it is applicable

and beneficial to all children in your care.

Special/additional needs affect children everywhere, not just at school, and they need time to relax and socialise too, or they will come to school un-refreshed the next day, which compounds their difficulties. A child who goes to school happy and relaxed, having rested well the night before and understood the homework they were set, will feel a sense of achievement and process information a lot better than one who is exhausted and stressed, yet again having experienced failure. In many cases homework set with care for the individual can help them to achieve this, so please rethink your school policy. And just remember...less or no homework also means less marking and less time reinforcing again in class what might have been understood better at home if it had been applicable to the child.

Aly, Chair APDUK ©

www.lacewingmultimedia.com/APD.htm

Homework suggestions for parents

Kindly contributed by a SENCo from the Becta Senco-forum
<http://lists.becta.org.uk/mailman/listinfo/senco-forum>

- 1 If possible a child should 'have a go', teachers prefer a child to have made some sort of attempt.
- 2 If you can, adapt the homework so they can attempt it. Send a short note of explanation as to why you adapted the work; this may help the teacher understand your child's difficulties.
- 3 If the school has homework support within school, encourage your child to use it.
- 4 If you have a PC, use it to word process. Again a short explanation as to why you encouraged your child to word process rather than write by hand can help.
- 5 Limit the amount of time your child spends on homework - 30 minutes to an hour, stop when they are tired.
- 6 Send a note to the teacher/SENCO/Head of Year explaining what you have done to support your child.
- 7 Don't fret, contact/ring the SENCO as soon as you can and ask them to intervene on your behalf with the teacher/senior staff. Most SENCOs are only too pleased to assist a parent.
- 8 If the problem persists, write to the SENCO, a letter can be very effective.
- 9 If this fails, write to the Head/SEN Governor/Parent Governor outlining your continued concerns. This is a serious step with major implications and should be embarked upon only when all other avenues have been exhausted.
- 10 Keep a copy of your correspondence.

SETTING HOMEWORK FOR SECONDARY PUPILS

Kindly contributed by Ruth Newbury, retired SENCo.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check that homework assignments have been copied down correctly. • Give out the homework assignment well <u>before</u> the end of the lesson. • Give time for the homework to be done rather than next-day deadlines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a special area of the board for writing up homework requirements. • Check that homework is recorded with deadlines. • Encourage students to highlight homework as it is completed - not cross it out. They should be able to read their homework record.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of items to be completed in a given assignment (for example, the number of words on the spelling list). 	Match homework to the student.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide practice questions for studying. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit the amount of homework to a certain amount of time spent productively, rather than an amount of work to be completed. 	Get them – or parents to enter time spent on a task in their homework diary – monitor time spent working outside school – aim for “what is reasonable”.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow the student to work on homework at school. Ideally study periods should be part of the school schedule. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marking of pupil’s work should be carried out with her/him present whenever possible; the teacher should sit on the same side of the desk. 	Mark on content not presentation of work – don’t assume those “beetle trails” across the page are nonsense - usually they contain an awful lot of what is right - but often it can be “a bother” to decipher what has often been painstakingly produced.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When correcting, try using two colours, one for content and the other for spelling and presentation. 	Or mark only one form of error – spelling – or punctuation – or capital letters - etc
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicate reading priorities. • When marking, specify the skills mastered by the student, rather than giving a letter grade. 	Match the literacy needs of your homework to the literacy levels of the group/individual.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark positively – tick the good bits. 	
Allow credit for projects involving hands-on activities such as collages, dioramas, posters etc.	
Allow oral or taped assignments.	
Insist on drafts of written work with deadlines.	
Provide regular guidance and appropriate supervision on planning assignments, especially extended projects that take several days or weeks to complete. A part of the SLD spectrum of symptoms may be a sort of a temporal disability where the gauging of time, and how long tasks will take, are distorted.	
Allow the student to begin an assignment and then go to the teacher after the first few problems are done for confirmation that he/she is doing the assignment properly, and to receive gentle correction or praise.	

Work talk

By Damien Howard © www.eartroubles.com

This article covers some of the common experiences of people with auditory processing problems in the workplace. While people with listening difficulties often excel when able to use their skills effectively, 'talk-focused' work processes can present challenges.

The job interview process can be challenging as people are quite understandably anxious that they will be judged if they misunderstand a question or take too long in answering the impromptu questions asked by unfamiliar people. The anxiety of interviews can be minimized by being able to prepare answers for questions beforehand. If the application process does not allow for this to occur, then it can be helpful to prepare answers for questions that are likely to be asked.

Starting a new job, changing jobs or changes in the workplace is often difficult for those with listening difficulties. Until work demands and routines are clearly understood, there is often pressure to quickly take in large amounts of verbal information. People can cope better if they are able to structure how information is presented to them so as to maximize visual and contextual learning. If possible, try to negotiate at the outset of job orientation to be able to observe people carrying out work in the real life situations. It can also help to read as much as possible about the work, especially to get 'the big picture' of things. Understanding the full context of tasks helps to work out what may have been missed in verbal explanations.

Face-to-face contact or reading are often preferred ways of communicating for those with listening difficulties. Face-to-face communication provides lots of non-verbal cues that help interpret words but even this can be difficult in situations where there is background noise. Open plan offices, noisy equipment, social gatherings and meetings can all make it harder to listen. Some workplaces, such as the public service, promote a culture of detachment from work issues that can make it harder to listen for people with listening difficulties. The absence of emotion can mean there are fewer non verbal cues that can help interpret what is being said. One person described it as being like listening to "blank faces going blah, blah, blah". At these times listening

overload is common, where people simply tune out from being overwhelmed by having to listen to too many words. People who 'go on and on', rather than get to the point quickly, can also create listening overload.

Reading can bypass having to gain information by listening. The rise of email as a communication tool is much appreciated by many people with listening problems. It is commonplace to ask people to email as well as, or instead of, talking about it. It is especially appreciated as a replacement to talking on the phone. Phone communication demands people listen without any visual cues being available to help clarify words. It is common that phone communication, especially talking to unfamiliar people about unfamiliar things, is very hard for many people with listening difficulties.

As well as difficulties there are lots of assets people bring to the workplace because of their adjustment to listening challenges. People often excel in areas where visual information processing is needed and may gravitate to areas such as graphics, design and information technology. Their use of preparation as a way of dealing with listening demands means they are often good at planning. The need to find different ways of doing things can result in problem solving skills and persisting in the face of adversity, as well as understanding the feelings of others with learning challenges. People's skills in reading body language may contribute to them being adept in areas such as sales or teaching. While some may enjoy working with many people when providing services they know well, others prefer to work with a small number of co-workers, where they have high levels of control over work that does not involve lots of listening demands. Some people prefer working in a team where their strengths are appreciated and weaknesses compensated for, while others prefer to work largely by themselves.

There is a range of work contexts and tasks where people listening difficulties

excel. Support, flexibility and persistence may be needed to face challenges, both by workers with listening problems and those who work with them. People often cope better if they are allowed the flexibility to find the best way for them to do the job. Workplaces that seek to achieve greater efficiency by 'talk focused' standard processes can make people with listening difficulties appear inefficient. It helps if supervisors and peers understand that auditory processing problems do not reflect lack of motivation or limited capacity, as workers remaining confident and being respected are key factors for successful employment outcomes for those with listening difficulties. The work of APDUK is an important contribution toward better employment outcomes for those with auditory processing difficulties. Share the information in this article with others to help overcome the common misunderstandings people have about those with listening difficulties in the workplace.

The tsunami and auditory processing

Auditory processing problems are likely to be prevalent in the areas devastated by the tsunami last year. The areas devastated are mostly poor and persistent middle ear disease, which commonly leads to auditory processing problems, is widespread in poor communities where there is inadequate nutrition and limited access to health care. This means that auditory processing problems will be widespread in the population of tsunami devastated areas. This will impact on recovery and especially hamper the work of outside development agencies.

To read more on this read trauma and tsunami on the articles page at www.eartroubles.com

Damien Howard is a psychologist and educator interested in the social outcomes of auditory processing problems. He is currently researching occupational outcomes of listening problems. Contact damien@eartroubles.com for more information

When you speak to me...

By Nina Robertson ©

When you speak I want to hear your words, but my brain hears:



The traffic outside



The dog barking next door



The phone ringing in the next room



The laughter and voices down the hall

The clicking of the keyboard



The ticking of the clock



The radio playing

The clacking of footsteps on the floor

The rattle of papers

The humming of the air conditioner

The brushing of the drapes

The rustle of the leaves on the window



And your voice.

When you speak I want to understand your words, but my brain tries to understand:

The traffic outside

The dog barking next door

The phone ringing in the next room

The laughter and voices in the hall

The clicking of the keyboard

The ticking of the clock

The radio playing

The clacking of footsteps on the floor

The rattle of papers

The humming of the air conditioner

The brushing of the drapes

The rustle of the leaves on the window

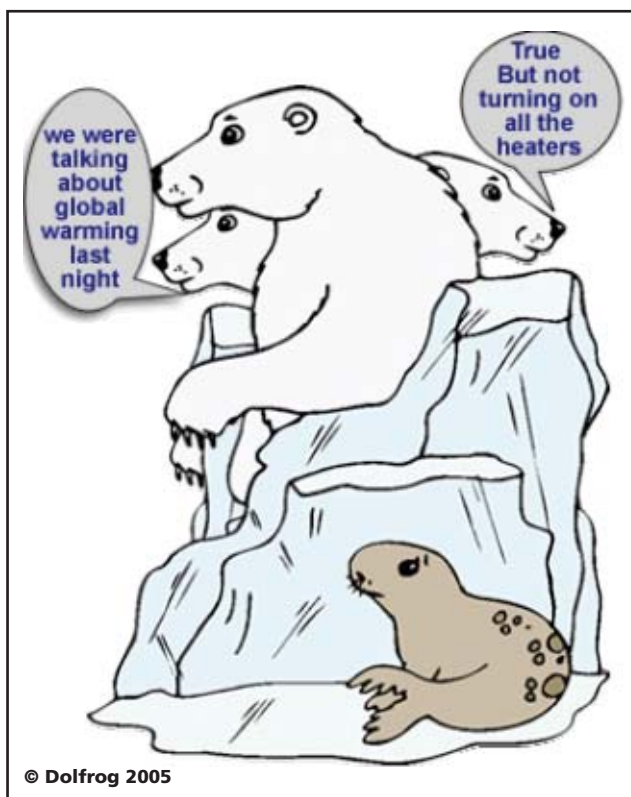
And your words.

Understand me: understand my auditory processing disorder

By Nina Robertson ©

When I tell you that I have an auditory disability, DO NOT go into a story about someone you know who blah blah blah . . . couldn't hear. . .blah blah blah hearing aid. . . blah blah. . .

- Do not include superfluous details when you are explaining a concept.
- Do not cover your mouth or turn your face away from me when you speak.
- Do not just start talking when you walk up to me. I need time to transition my focus from my current task to my listening task.
- Try not to interrupt yourself with asides when you are talking. It can confuse me.
- Please do not interrupt me when I am speaking. I am easily derailed, and have a lot of trouble resuming my focus.
- Do not chat with me when I am trying to accomplish a task (getting ready to go out, following a recipe etc). I will most likely forget something or skip an important step.
- Try to have patience with me.



- I know that my disability is inconvenient for you, but try to remember that I am struggling with this disorder with every interaction and encounter all day everyday forever.
- Please do not suggest I get a hearing aid. I have been researching my options for years and stay on top of breaking technology in the audiological community.
- A simple conversation can exhaust me to the point of tears. Please do not tell me that I am overreacting.
- Always identify yourself over the phone. I may not recognize your voice, even if you are my sister or a friend I have known all my life.
- Please do not talk to me when I am not in the same room. I may hear your voice, but I will not understand your words.
- Do not leave long messages on my answering machine. Keep all phone messages short and to the point.
- When I am driving, do not turn on the radio and start chatting. Not only will I not understand what you say, I will have trouble focusing on my driving.
- Do not bog down your conversation with a lot of pauses and extra words. I cannot tell if the pauses and words mean that you have finished speaking, are changing the subject, or if you are just drawing breath.
- Try not to use negation in your speech. I have trouble with sequencing. My brain will not know if the negation applies to the first item mentioned, the last, or any in between.
- NEVER under any circumstance tease me about having selective hearing! I have heard this all my life and it hurts.
- Sometimes I can hear whispers in the next cubicle. Sometimes I cannot hear and process normal speech directed at me. IT IS RANDOM!!!! NOT Selective!
- When I tell you that I am not tracking, say that I am doing fine, or try to keep me on the phone.
- When I get to that point, my processing abilities are taxed and all extra effort to be nice and listen is debilitating.
- Do talk to me over loud noises. I am so programmed to try to listen and understand that I will concentrate on your words, but my defective filters make me concentrate equally on the loud noises. This leads to sensory overload.
- Remember! I live with APD 24/7. It NEVER takes a break or a day off. This challenge is one that I must cope with and compensate for in every area of my life.

I did not choose this invisible disability. It chose me.

The Portland Project - free adult literacy training

The Portland Project, which will last about a year, came about as a result of a summer school in 2004 (funded by Connexions and the local secondary school) set up on Portland for pupils with reading delay who were transferring to secondary school and who wanted to improve their reading skills during the summer break.

During the five weeks that the programme ran, several people associated with the funding sources came to observe the proceedings. It is a very fast acting method; the average increase in word recognition was 12 months after five once weekly lessons lasting around 30 minutes. During one of the sessions I was asked by one of the observers if a similar programme would work with adults and the answer was yes.

As a result of my conversations with this individual I applied for and got a grant towards setting up a similar programme for adults in the Portland & Weymouth area. I have recruited a small team of community minded volunteers who are fully trained and who will assist me in delivering the programme and thereby allow me to deal with a larger number than would otherwise be the case.

Access to the programme is completely free and confidentiality is assured, it is strictly one on one, no class no groups. A reading assessment pre test and post test is all that is required from the participants and the results will remain confidential, the reason for this is to provide data to the funders, so that the method can be offered to people in other areas.

If there is enough demand I will set up a similar programme in the Exeter area.

How we do what we do

The method uses the learner's own voice - recorded in a special way - as the teaching mechanism; this allows access to the feedback from the production and perception of the learner's own speech. The learner in effect becomes the teacher and is in full control of the learning process. The learner, with the help of the tutor, makes a tape, takes it away and practices by writing down to dictation all that is on the tape, they are

in effect taking dictation from their own voice, much as you do when you write.

The writing aspect is important as it involves the kinaesthetic system and this helps to integrate the input from the other senses involved. The learner is then interactively using vision, speech, hearing and writing.

If the learner has writing problems associated with fine motor control then they can use a word processor or typewriter and we also supply moveable letters so they can place them in the same way as they would if writing and this maintains the kinaesthetic/tactile input.

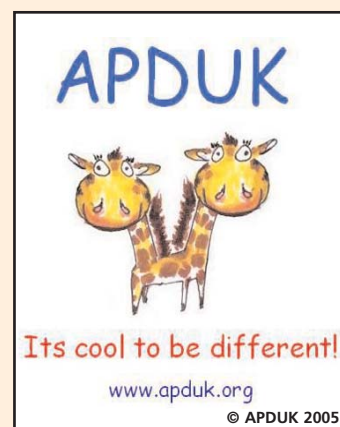
For those with APD or who may find problems taking dictation of any sort, even using their own voice, the dictation is on tape and available for endless replay and this will help those with poor auditory recall. We train them in how to use a tape player effectively, so that if needed they can listen word by word and memory demands are controlled by the learner.

The lesson material is structured and cumulative and the method is multi sensory in every respect. The lessons involve words and sentences; it is not phonic drill but deals with all the aspects of the learning to read process in an integrated way. Taping sessions take around 20 to 30 minutes and the practices which can be done daily at home take around 10 to 15 minutes.

To do the practice a mono tape player with a set of headphones and a note book is required, walkmans are fine and the headphones can be obtained very cheaply, we will supply the tapes, which are retained by the learner for later use if required. We are planning to offer evening and possibly Saturday lesson slots depending on demand. A motivated adult could expect to put at least 24 - 30 months on word recognition skills in a 12 week period working for around 20 minutes or so per day.

There are two ways to register, anonymously if you wish: Ring Island Volunteers For You on 01305 823789 or email P.Macmillan@exeter.ac.uk

Philip MacMillan
A.F.B.Ps.S., C. Psychol.
Chartered Psychologist



Spreading the word

APDUK will soon be producing T-shirts promoting our campaign for recognition of Auditory Processing Disorder and advertising that APDUK is available to all. There will be designs for adults with APD, parents, children and supporters.

This and other promotional merchandise will be available to purchase via the APDUK website in the first instance (at a reduced rate to APDUK members). Please support us in raising funds to ensure we can continue our work.



Smartlink communication aid

By Rachel Jury ©

I'm a first year undergraduate studying Radiotherapy and Oncology in Cardiff University. I have struggled with dyslexia and Auditory Processing Disorder throughout my education. It's difficult to explain what Auditory Processing Disorder is like; sometimes people think you are being ignorant if you cannot understand or hear a group of people talking. Lessons are hard because if there is background noise I cannot concentrate on the teacher talking.

The first few weeks in College were very difficult as there was a need to write notes whilst listening to the lecturer. I tend to lip read as an aid to listening, it therefore becomes impossible for me to listen and write at the same time. If I concentrate on the writing then I lose out on the lecturer's next point.

I have been very fortunate to receive a wonderful aid, courtesy of

the special needs unit and the NHS in Cardiff. This equipment has made a huge difference to my studies and I now enjoy the lectures, I used to find them quite stressful.

The equipment I have been provided with consists of 2 hearing aids and a radio microphone/transmitter (Smart Link SX and edulinks). The small hearing aids fit over my ears and are quite comfortable to wear and are unobtrusive. The speaker wears the radio microphone/transmitter around their necks similar to an identity necklace. The microphone/transmitter is the size of a small mobile phone but weighs less. The range of the equipment is 30m but in reality I have tested the unit to distances in excess of 100m without any loss in sound quality. The microphone/transmitter is versatile and can be attached to a telephone, TV, etc. to improve the quality of sound entering the ear.

The transmitter can also be placed on a table around which a discussion is

taking place. It has the capability of enhancing the speaker's voice whilst reducing other ambient noises. The transmitter operates in 3 modes, these are:

Super Zoom – High noise levels, fewer speakers and focuses on a narrow angle in front of the Smartlink.

Zoom – Medium noise levels, fewer speakers and focuses on a wider angle in front of the Smartlink.

Omni – Low noise levels, multiple speakers with a 360 degree reception around the Smartlink.

The Smartlink mode has to be set before the lecturer wears it. I am grateful to the lecturers for wearing it and they have taken a keen interest in the equipment.

This really is an amazing piece of technology and has improved my capability to keep up with my fellow students. They also benefit from the equipment as they don't have to put up with me asking "WHAT DID SHE SAY?".

"Economy of Language: Minimal words = Maximum Understanding." Nina Robertson ©

APDUK Chats and Forums

All APDUK chats are held here.

<http://client.sigmachat.com/sc.pl?id=46104>

Participants need to register with Aly olanys@aol.com to access our private chat rooms.

Transcripts are available but only to those that attend the chats in order to maintain confidentiality.

2006 Chat Diary

First Saturday of the month- Parents and Supporters Chat

For parents and supporters of those with APD and interested professionals.

Third Saturday of the month- Adults with APD Chat

For adults with APD and our associated Adults' Research Project chats.

Last Sunday of the month- APDUK members-only chat

For paid members only of the voluntary organisation APDUK.

In addition, committee meetings are held as and when necessary.

**Please note that times and dates may change so*

please pay attention to the forums below for full details- which are posted a few days prior to all chats.

APDUK Forums

All are welcome to join these forums.

APDUK forum

<http://groups.msn.com/AuditoryProcessingDisorderintheUK/>

For everyone with an interest in APD.

OldAPDds forum

<http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/OldAPDs/>

For adults with APD or suspected APD.

APDUK message board style forum

<http://apduk.org/OpenForum/>

Please register for the open forum first, then you will be able to apply to join the board for parents and the adults boards with access to our research topics. There will soon be a message board moderated and run by professionals for professionals. The members' forum is only open to registered members of the voluntary organisation APDUK.



A new friend

the class a few weeks. He walked over to Stewart.

"Never mind," said Sam, "perhaps he's just got a loose wire."

"It's OK," said Stewart, "he does it all the time. He's got a problem following instructions and he gets confused."

"I know how he feels," said Sam, "I do that all the time too. I hear OK, but sometimes words just don't make any sense. And by the time I work it out, I've forgotten what I'm supposed to be doing!"

"Me too!" said Stewart, "I thought I was the only one."

"So did I!" said Sam. "I try to finish my work but the others just laugh and call me slow and stupid. I hate it when they make all that noise too," he said, pointing to the other children, running around, shouting and laughing.

"I know!" said Stewart. "When I'm trying to work there are people talking, doors banging, chairs scraping. I just can't think straight! He's the same."

He looked down at the robot, who was now walking round and round in circles on the ground with its hands held up to his head.

"The noise upsets him too. That's why he fell over the step."

"Poor thing, I know how he feels! I can't do spellings either," said Sam, "I either write down the wrong word or

can't work out what letter comes next. What about you?"

"Oh, I'm not too bad at spelling, said Stewart, "but I can't do maths at all. It just doesn't make sense."

"Is there anything you're good at?" asked Sam. "I like computer games, Dad says I'm better at them than anything!"

"I'm hopeless at them," said Stewart, "but I can draw! I draw all the time at home."

"I remember," said Sam, "you won that big art competition recently, didn't you? Can he do anything else?" he asked as the robot stood there, swaying from side to side.

"He can fly!" said Stewart. "Do you want to see?"

"OK," said Sam.

With that, wings shot out from under the robot's arms and it rose slowly into the air. The children all stopped to watch, and then started yelling and cheering as it circled above them. Suddenly, bright red sparks flew out of its head and it fell with a thud. Luckily, Sam caught it.

"Oh, no, not again" said Stewart, as he and Sam walked away, laughing. Stewart was so glad he had finally found someone who would never make fun of him, someone just like him, a new friend; and Sam felt exactly the same.

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MY NEWS *(printed exactly as written)*

Today was my turn for news. I forgot it at home and I used (just) me to tell about (it). I did what mum did at the meeting last week. I stood up and told them my name is Scott and I have APD. They all looked at me like they were waiting for the funny bit. I told them that sometimes I can't hear them properly and I don't like it when they yell in the class. It hurts my ears. When lots of people talk to me and yell so I can hear them I can't work out what they want to say. I told them when they talk when the teacher is talking I can't hear her and then I don't know what to do and sometimes I get in trouble and that's not fair. I told them that talking louder at me won't make me hear better because my hearing is really good. I said I want them to remember that like they remember I can't eat corn and grass makes me itchy. I told them that APD was worse than allergies because people listen when you have allergies

because they can see what happens when you get them but no one can see APD and sometimes people think I am norty (naughty) or don't listen. Then we had questions and comments. Geoffory said I can't have it because I'm too smart and disabled people are dumb. I got in trouble because I told him he was dumb and he wasn't disabled. William asked if I was born with it or if I had a accident. I said I think I was born with it because mum and Jack and Rebecca have it too and we haven't all been in a accident. Lauren asked if it is catchy and I said maybe so she'd leave me alone and stop trying to kiss me. Frankie asked if it can kill me but the teacher wouldn't let me answer it and I told Frankie at recess it can't kill me. Then the teacher told us it was time to do reading groups and she made my group sit in the noisy room and I couldn't read properly. I don't like her.

by Scott, almost 8, who lives in Australia.

APDUK POLL RESULTS

We recently set up an international online poll for parents/supporters and one for adults with APD, asking what had helped them most in coping with APD and what they had found most difficult to obtain. Here are the results so far:

Which of the following has helped you most as a parent/supporter of a child with APD/suspected APD?

Support of others/knowning you aren't alone	42%
Validation that your child isn't lazy/stupid as others suspected	17%
Validation that you weren't making it all up/imagining a problem	33%
Remediation programs for APD - if appropriate	8%

Which of the following have you found useful as a parent/supporter?

APDUK website	15%
APDUK information/handouts	23%
APDUK Newsletters	15%
APDUK online forums	8%
APDUK online chats	31%
APDUK representatives' contributions to other related forums	8%

What has helped you most as an adult with APD/suspected APD?

Knowing you aren't alone/support of others in similar circumstances	54%
Validation that you aren't lazy/stupid as others suspected	15%
Validation that you weren't making it all up/imagining a problem	8%
Obtaining an APD diagnosis	8%
Acceptance from family	15%

Which of the following have you been unable to obtain, whether as a parent/supporter or an adult with APD?

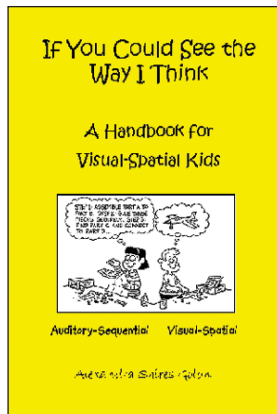
Support of others in similar circumstances	6%
Validation that you weren't making it all up/imagining a problem	6%
An APD diagnosis	6%
Acceptance from family/friends	6%
Acceptance/support from professionals	18%
Acceptance at school/ work	18%
Support with socialisation	29%
Remediation programs for APD - if appropriate	12%

This is an ongoing poll; please take part to help APDUK to improve our support and services.
<http://www.lacewingmultimedia.com/poll.htm>
 Please send any comments to Aly olanys@aol.com

Recommended books

This is a collection of books recommended by APDUK and OldAPDs members and a selection from the APDUK website books section.

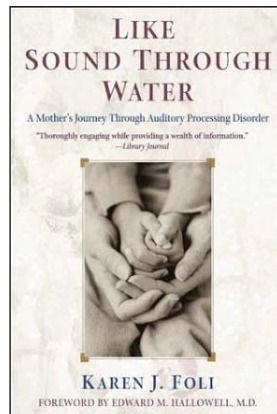
If you order any books, CDs DVDs etc. via Amazon (UK or US) through the APDUK website, APDUK will receive a small donation towards our funds and it will cost you no more. <http://www.books.apduk.org/>



If You Could See the Way I Think: A Handbook for Visual-Spatial Kids
by Alexandra Shires Golan

SYNOPSIS

This book is a celebration of the gifts of those who prefer a visual-spatial learning style! The 21st century will demand the skills set these students were born with: multi-dimensional imagery, facility with computers, and an innate ability to "think outside the box." Aimed at visual-spatial learners who can use help in the following areas: Spelling, Handwriting, Taking Timed Tests, Memorizing Times Tables, Getting and Staying Organized, Focusing During Auditory Lectures, Creating Outlines and Written Reports, and much more. Please go to <http://www.gifteddevelopment.net/xcart/home.php?cat=3>



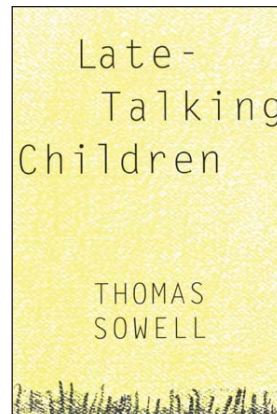
Like Sound Through Water: A Mother's Journey Through Auditory Processing Disorder
by Karen J. Foli

PRODUCT DETAILS:

- Hardcover 285 pages (February 25, 2002)
- Publisher: Pocket Books
- Language: English
- ISBN: 0743421981

SYNOPSIS

The author recounts her personal experiences dealing with a child suffering from auditory processing disorder, describing the misdiagnoses and lack of understanding of the ailment that hampered her struggle to help her son learn to communicate.



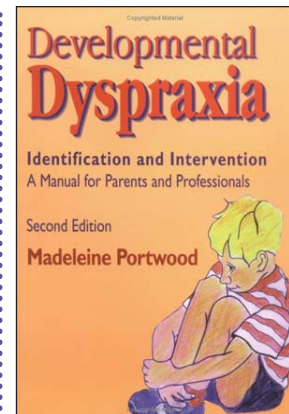
Late-talking Children
by Thomas Sowell

PRODUCT DETAILS:

- Paperback 192 pages (July 1998)
- Publisher: Basic Books
- Language: English
- ISBN: 0465038352

SYNOPSIS

One of Americas leading intellectuals offers a moving and deeply personal account of his experiences with his own son, a late-talking child, and offers hope, advice, and fellowship to parents who are faced with a similar situation. The painful and baffling mystery as to why some obviously bright children do not begin talking until long after the normal time is explored in this book through personal experiences and the findings of scientific research. Fortunately, some of these children turn out to have not only normal intelligence but even outstanding abilities.



Developmental Dyspraxia: Identification and Intervention: A Manual for Parents and Professionals
by Madeleine Portwood

PRODUCT DETAILS:

- Paperback 2242 pages (January 21, 1999)
- Publisher: David Fulton Publishers Ltd
- Language: English
- ISBN: 1853465739

SYNOPSIS

Aims to give parents, teachers and health professionals the confidence and know-how to diagnose and assess dyspraxia. Includes background information on the neurological basis of the condition; strategies for identification, diagnosis and assessment; proven programmes of intervention which can be monitored by anyone closely involved; strategies to improve curricular attainments; remediation activities to develop perceptual and motor skills; programmes to develop self-esteem; information about where to find help.

Log onto www.books.apduk.org for more books on APD issues and related invisible disabilities

APDUK Membership Application Form

Auditory Processing Disorder in the United Kingdom

I AM/WE ARE APPLYING FOR (please tick)

Name

Address

.....

.....

Postcode

Tel. No(preferably not a mobile No)

Email

Please tick your preferred options regarding how we can contact you.

- Post E-mail Telephone

I am interested in APD for one or more of the following reasons

(Please tick the relevant box(es) which apply to you)

- I think I may have APD
- A young member(s) of my family may have APD
- An adult member(s) of my family may have APD
- I have a professional interest regarding APD
- I am interested in issues relating to APD and the Education System
- I am interested in issues relating to APD and Employment
- I am interested in Support for Families coping with APD

Please tick the nature of your interest

- Audiologist
- Paediatrician
- Educational Psychologist
- Special Educational Needs
- Other
- Speech & Language
- SENCo
- Parent Partnership
- Occupational Therapist

- Individual Membership **£5.00**
- Family Membership **£7.50**
- Concessionary Membership **£2.00**
- Professional Membership **£10.00**

TYPES OF APDUK MEMBERSHIP

Individual Membership

Annual Membership for anyone with an interest in Auditory Processing Disorder. Parents, relatives, friends, of sufferers or even the individual sufferers themselves.

Family Membership

Annual membership for families who have an interest in Auditory Processing Disorder. This is a Single Annual payment for all the named members of a family unit.

Concessionary Membership

Annual Concessionary Membership is for someone interested in Auditory Processing Disorder and is in full time education, unwaged / low waged or over 60.

Professional Membership

Annual Membership for the many professionals groups whose work will involve them with those who suffer from APD and the related disabilities.

Please send the completed form together with a cheque made payable to APDUK to:
Mr. Mark Mitchell,
Membership Secretary APDUK
c/o Dacorum CVS,
48, High Street,
Hemel Hempstead,
Herts HP1 3AF

Possible indicators of Auditory Processing Disorder/ APD

One of the important indicators is a family history of Auditory Processing Disorder/APD. APD is thought to be a hereditary condition, although all siblings might not be affected and it might skip generations.

N.B. The characteristics below might also be present in other conditions and are not meant to indicate a diagnosis of APD, but to serve as a means of establishing a possible auditory processing difficulty. Many can indicate hearing loss, which should be ruled out. APD should always be investigated by a professional trained in assessing APD.

Pre-school children with APD may exhibit some of these:

- Over-alert or hypersensitive to sound as a baby, or the opposite, appearing oblivious or unable to hear.
- Slow learning to talk, unable to learn or remember nursery rhymes.
- Might prefer looking at books to listening to stories.
- Overly focussed on television or what they are playing.
- May appear not to hear you, hard to get their attention.
- May seem affected by loud noises or upset by noisy social situations like birthday parties or family gatherings, busy shops etc. especially ones that play music.
- Ear infections/glue ear in early years can be a cause or add to existing problems.
- Easily tired and overwhelmed.

The school-age child with APD may exhibit some of these:

- Appears not to hear at all when you speak or has a delayed response or reply.
- Frequent "What" or "Huh" replies, not understood what is said.
- Inattention, inability to listen.
- Thought of as a daydreamer or selective listener, may often appear in a world of their own
- Inability to follow multi-step instructions.
- Problems with understanding speech in background noise.
- Problems with the direction and distance from which sound is coming.
- Delayed speech or some speech difficulties in mispronunciation or learning vocabulary.
- May speak louder or quieter than normal, unaware of the volume.
- Word retrieval problems (not finding the right words to say).
- Problems with reading and/or spelling.
- Difficulty with maths' word problems/understanding new concepts/sequences.
- Missing inferences, may not understand sarcasm or humour.
- Social /communication difficulties, problems making or keeping friends due to miscommunication.
- Is easily tired and overwhelmed.
- Shows signs of frustration.

Have you heard about **AUDITORY PROCESSING DISORDER/APD?**

APDUK

For those who need more than words...
www.apduk.org

- Do you have problems understanding what you hear, even if you have been told that your hearing is good?
- Do background noise and/or crowds make this worse?
- Do people think you don't listen to them?
- Do you have reading/spelling problems?
- Do you have problems following spoken instructions?

If so, you might have Auditory Processing Disorder/APD

(These difficulties might not all be present.)

Auditory Processing Disorder (APD) is not a problem with hearing, but with the way sound is processed by the brain. This can be diagnosed by trained specialists but will not show up on normal hearing tests.

Those with APD can appear unable to hear but may have perfect hearing, although it can also co-exist with hearing loss. APD can exist alone or with any other learning difficulties or disabilities. It is a major cause of dyslexia. APD is for life but coping strategies can help, as can support at school, at home and at work.

Please pick up a leaflet, if available, or contact us for more information

Websites: www.apduk.org and www.lacewingmultimedia.com/APD.htm

Alyson Mountjoy - Chair
07815 995491 olanys@aol.com

Graeme Wadlow - Vice Chair
01442 214555 dolfrog@apduk.org

Mark Mitchell - Hon Secretary

APDUK, c/o Dacorum CVS,
48, High Street, Hemel Hempstead,
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