



what is CAPD

HELPING CHILDREN WITH CENTRAL
AUDITORY PROCESSING DISORDER

HEAR THE DIFFERENCE OUR INVISIBLE SOLUTIONS GIVE YOU

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@THE ART OF HEARING

When a person is exposed to sound, their ears detect the sound and transmit the information to the auditory part of the brain where sound stimulus is processed.

In the end, they'll know the direction from which the sound is coming, they'll identify the type of sound, and separate the sound from background noise so they can interpret it.

They'll store a memory of the sound stimulus and develop a mental sound library from which they can pull the information whenever they hear that noise again. So if a child hears a bell rings today, they'll recognise the sound again tomorrow.

What is Central Auditory Processing Disorder?

Some children appear to have normal hearing ability when they're in quiet environments, yet they'll have difficulty when it's time for them to listen and pay attention at school or in social situations. They may behave as though they have a hearing loss, or you might think they're ignoring you. There's a chance they have a central auditory processing disorder (CAPD), a condition that affects how a child processes and interpret sounds.

A child with CAPD has an impaired ability to pay attention to, discriminate, remember, recognise or understand what they hear. That's why they have trouble following what the teacher is saying, and this in turn affects how much they're learning in the classroom. They'll also have trouble hearing what you say to them in a noisy environment.

Research shows that CAPD affects as many as two percent of Australian children, and typically has a negative impact on their academic performance. Left untreated, these processing difficulties become more pronounced in challenging listening situations, such as in noisy backgrounds or poor acoustic environments. Some children may even become withdrawn or get very frustrated.

What a child with CAPD experiences

A child with CAPD isn't able to process what they hear in the same way as other children.

Children with CAPD may:

- find it hard to tell where a sound is coming from
- struggle to follow a series of directions – they've only heard part of it
- pronounce or sound the words the 'wrong' way
- often ask you to repeat what you've said
- confuse similar sounding words, for example "sheep" for "cheek"
- hear you better if they watch you as you speak



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- struggle to hear what you're saying when there's background noise
- find it hard to keep up when you're speaking too fast
- often seem to ignore what you're saying when they're engrossed in an activity.

Diagnosis

Although CAPD is a physical disorder, you can't detect it from a quick check-up. It also doesn't show up as a hearing loss on routine hearing tests as it affects the hearing system beyond the ear, therefore requiring a series of special assessments by an audiologist. They'll perform a battery of specialised tests to establish a profile of the child's listening skills. These assessments are typically carried out over two one-hour appointments, after normal hearing is confirmed.

Treatment

While the human auditory system is fully developed at birth, the auditory pathways continue to mature into adolescence. This is good news since it means that CAPD is responsive to early intervention.

The type of treatment recommended will depend on the child's profile as shown in their test results.

Recommendations may include:

- computer-based auditory training programs to address the specific weaknesses
- environmental modifications to improve the acoustics of listening situations
- communication strategies to use in the classroom situation
- personal listening devices such as FM systems
- phonological awareness training with a speech-language pathologist to address specific difficulties.

what should you do

What to do if you suspect a child has CAPD

Early identification is important for children with CAPD. So if you suspect your child may be having difficulties processing sounds, it's important to speak about your concerns with a hearing specialist.

Contact us via email at listen@artofhearing.com.au or make an appointment at one of our convenient locations.

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