



Handy Handouts®

Free informational handouts for educators, parents, and students

What is Central Auditory Processing Disorder?



By Adrienne DeWitt, M.A., CCC-SLP

Central Auditory Processing Disorder (CAPD) is a deficit in the ability to process auditory (sound) information. This can negatively impact a child's language and learning.

The breakdown occurs in the central nervous system, not the ear. CAPD can be caused by a brain injury, but often the cause is unknown.

It can be found in some children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and other language and learning disabilities. Both an audiologist and a speech-language pathologist (SLP) work together to evaluate and diagnose CAPD.



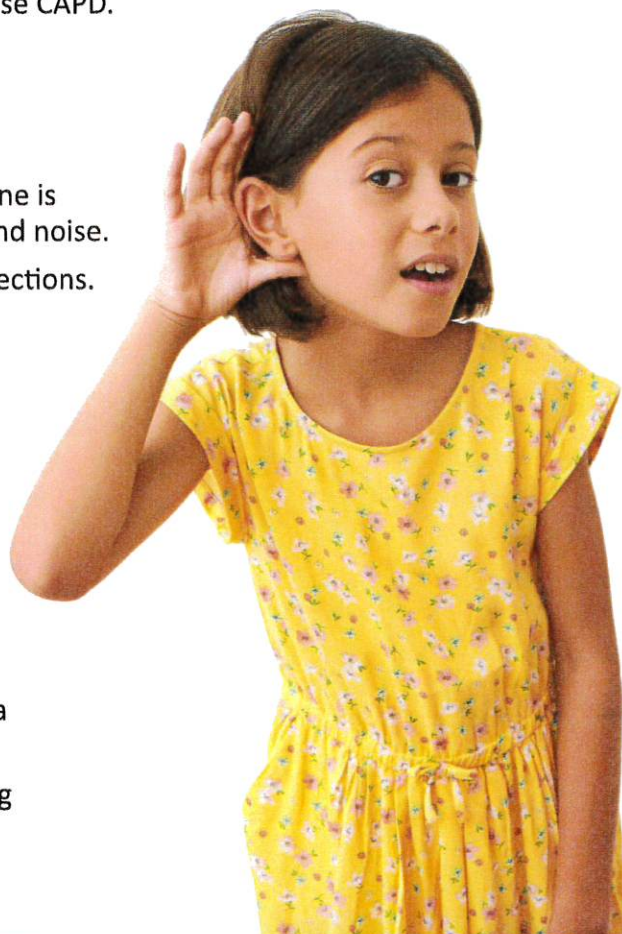
Children with CAPD have difficulty with...

- Understanding language, especially if someone is speaking fast or in the presence of background noise.
- Following directions, especially multistep directions.
- Paying attention.
- Reading and spelling.
- Learning new nursery rhymes, songs, and languages.



A child with CAPD may...

- Misinterpret messages.
- Say "What?" often.
- Respond to messages inconsistently or take a long time to respond.
- Struggle with academic tasks, such as reading and spelling.





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(cont.)



To help a child with CAPD, parents and educators can...

- Maintain eye contact while giving directions.
- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Break down directions into simpler, smaller parts.
- Check to make sure the student understands directions by asking him/her to repeat them; rephrase the instructions if need be.
- Add visual reminders and organizers, such as a graphic organizer.
- Use an FM system in the classroom to cut down on background noise if the recommendation is made by an audiologist (see [Handy Handout #281](#) for more information).
- Reduce background noise, like the humming of a computer.
- Reduce the echo in the room by adding absorbent materials to hard surfaces, such as a rug.



An SLP might help by...

- Teaching key words to help the comprehension of directions.
- Having the student identify sounds, discriminate (tell the difference between) two sounds, recognize sounds patterns, train listening with background noise, etc.
- Using computer programs, like [HearBuilder](#), to help develop following directions, phonological awareness, auditory memory, and sequencing skills.
- Teaching memory techniques, such as repetition and chunking of information.

Resources:

"Central Auditory Processing Disorder," American Speech and Hearing Association, accessed August 10, 2020, <https://www.asha.org/PRPSpecificTopic.aspx?folderid=8589943561§ion=Overview>.

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