

Central Auditory Processing Disorder (CAPD).

* CAPD is a disorder affecting the ability to attend to auditory information. This disorder is not due to hearing difficulty, but rather to how the brain and Central Nervous System interpret acoustic signals. A child with CAPD will have difficulty processing what a speaker is saying, especially when there is competing noise (ex. a classroom with students talking) or when the voice is somehow modified (ex. on the phone). This child may appear to be unfocused or misbehaving as a result. Children with CAPD are often confused for children with Attention Deficit Disorder.

* Symptoms of CAPD include the child frequently misunderstanding or not hearing what was said (ex. often say "what?" or "huh?"), demonstrating poor attention in noisy environments, difficulty following spoken directions, difficulty determining the location or origin of a sound, and poor academic performance. Of course other factors must be ruled out first.

* An Audiologist will diagnose CAPD following a series of specialized listening tests, such as having the child determine which ear a sound is presented to, what order sounds were presented, or picking out a word from background noise. Note that the Montreal Children's Hospital will not evaluate for CAPD before the age of 6 to allow for cognitive development.

* Some children with CAPD use an FM system in class to improve attention in class. This system consists of a receiver the child wears (often headphones or a wire loop around the neck) and a transmitter worn by the teacher (a small device usually clipped to the collar). This improves the signal-to-noise ratio of the teacher's voice, like a private radio station for the child.

* Other ways to help a child with CAPD are: present visuals, not just spoken information; teach memory strategies; break down multi-step instructions; help them with learning new vocabulary; make sure you are facing them when speaking.

* More info can be found here:

<http://www.canadianaudiology.ca/consumer/apd-in-children.html>

<http://www.asha.org/public/hearing/Understanding-Auditory-Processing-Disorders-in-Children/>

* To search for an audiologist in your region:

<http://www.ooaq.qc.ca/ou-consulter/repertoire/?idTitre2=Audio>