**Central Auditory Processing Disorder (CAPD) Information**

**For John**

For complete information on CAPD, visit www.capdsupport.org

John has been diagnosed with CAPD, Decoding Subype: Presents with auditory discrimination difficulties, especially in the presence of ambient sound. He has challenges analyzing differences between sounds. He is challenged to hear rapid speech and often asks "huh?" He behaves as if there is a hearing loss when there is none. This is the classic type of CAPD.

**What is Central Auditory Processing Disorder?**

When we hear a sound, the sound is taken into the inner ear and delivered to the brain and the brain translates what is being heard. When a person is deaf, the part of the ear that delivers the sound to the brain does not function. When a person has CAPD, the part of the brain that translates what the ear delivers does not function properly. The person with CAPD can hear sounds, but how the brain translates those sounds is disrupted, and the end result is a garbled message.

People who have CAPD have normal hearing, so they are not considered hearing impaired. The neurological processing of the sounds they hear is impaired, which is why it's called a processing disorder.

In a sense, a child with normal hearing and a central auditory processing disorder is comparable to a child with normal vision and a reading disorder. Vision acuity, or seeing, is good but the mind has a problem making use of the input from the eyes. CAPD is often called dyslexia of the ears.

Children with CAPD have a similar problems comprehending speech. The sensory system (in this case the ear) that brings speech into the body is working properly, but the parts of the brain that analyze and interpret the sensory information are not. This problem becomes more apparent in poorer listening environments, such as open classrooms and background noise.

Think of the problem you would have if suddenly you found yourself in England at the time of Shakespeare. The speech is English but in a strange, accented style with different constructions and meanings. You might not comprehend enough of the common words to order a meal. Find this hard to believe? Just have someone rapidly read a section from Hamlet to you. It takes longer to comprehend than if it were written in modern structures and usage.

**What are the Symptoms of CAPD?**

* Difficulty hearing in the presence of ambient noise
* Difficulty following along or keeping up in conversations
* Poor auditory memory
* Difficulty following auditory multi-step instructions
* May have speech delay from a young age
* Often misinterprets what is said, but doesn't realize it's been misinterpreted
* Missed subtle social cues
* May have difficulty with phonics and learning to read
* Exhibits attention issues
* May exhibit auditory distractibility
* Often says "huh?" or "what?"

**Does it effect anything besides what the child understands?**

CAPD can effect a child’s ability to remember what is said. Because the listening process requires intense focus by the child, the child’s brain does not have the resources to store in short-term memory what has been said. If a child with CAPD has to listen to long-winded instructions, the child may exhibit signs of fatigue, inattention or frustration because of the extra effort required to attune to the auditory information. The child will also not remember more than the first sentence or two of what is said.

**What can be done in the classroom to help?**  
  
1) Reduce Background Noise   
Make every effort to eliminate extraneous noise. A noisy background does not need to be loud to keep John from comprehending words. Even mild noises such as the hum of a fan or the sounds of a quiet crowd may be enough to create a poor listening and learning environment for the child. If John is not responding, or his response is inappropriate, consider that he has not understood what you have said. In the presence of background noise, his behavior might look like: failure to respond when spoken to, incorrect responses when spoken to, distractible, over active, confused or anxious.

2) Consider your distance

When John is spoken to from a great distance (more than 5 feet), John will definitely be challenged to comprehend what is said. Consider moving closer to him when speaking to him. Sound intensity drops quickly over a short distance. Moving closer is a great, easy help.

3) Obtain visual attention

Get eye contact from John before talking to him. This can be done by touching him on the shoulder or using an auditory prompt (ie. Saying his name). This is very important when introducing a new idea, changing subjects, or giving directions. CAPD child needs additional prompting in order to have attention focused properly.

4) Slow down speech

Too much information too quickly is challenging for John to comprehend. Speak one idea at a time, and pause so he can take it in and assimilate it; then move onto the next idea. It does not have to be super slow, just pace your words, with a few seconds between ideas to help him take it in better.

5) Make John responsible for understanding

Encourage him to repeat back what he has heard to make certain he understands. Don’t embarrass him by having him prove it in front of the class, do it in a sidebar one-on-one. In addition, remind him to always raise his hand and ask if he doesn’t understand. This is an area where the aide can assist to make certain John understands the directions he is meant to follow.

6) His seat should be in the front of the room

The front of the class is where he has good visual reception of the area where most teaching is done. Avoid seating by open doors or windows. Make sure he can see the teacher's face. Avoid strong shadows which hide the face. Standing in front of windows on a sunny day will hide the face.

7) Provide additional written or visual material.

John does not yet read fully, but simple words and visual cues that give him an idea of directions will help him keep up. Even just writing out 1,2,3,etc. for steps will remind him how many steps he has to go through. John has impaired short-term memory, so 10 or 20 minutes after hearing instructions, he may need them repeated.

8) Seat him next to helpful students

John enjoys independence, but he is open to help from peers. In previous classes being sat next to a helpful student improved his performance greatly. When he was sat next to students who talked out of turn a lot, or themselves had attention issues, John’s performance was definitely affected.

**What can be done on the playground?**   
  
In the presence of playground noises John should be viewed as very hard of hearing. In CAPD test he was shown to only comprehend 10% of what is said in the presence of ambient noise. As a result, his reactions may not align to verbal information received from peers. The other children may misconstrue this as stupid or not cooperating, and in the past John has had children call him names or kick him out of the play group because he “appeared” to not want to play by their rules.

There is a safety hazard that supervisors must be made aware of. Because John does not understand what is being said, he can misinterpret situations. On more than one occasion John has jumped into the middle of a fight because he thought the boys were wrestling, and without understanding their yells and words, he didn’t realize they were fighting. According to his special ed team at his old school, this happened quite often. He seems to have grown more cautious with age, but we still see this happen on occasion. He must be watched in order to avoid possible physical harm.

On the playground it is most important to gain John’s visual attention and move close to him when giving him instructions or important information. Ask him to repeat back anything that is truly important, and this will tell you if he has understood you.

**What about special assemblies?**

John is very sensitive to crowded, noisy environments. These confuse him greatly because he is essentially deaf, and this makes him very anxious. His proprioceptive issues tend to kick in, and he will be more hyper and less aware of his environment when he gets anxious.

We would appreciate being notified of any possible assemblies at school. We will make every effort to be at school in the event that John needs to be removed, or to sit with him to reassure him. For example, the last 4 years of school he has chosen to leave the Halloween school parade because the commotion around the event was too much for him. One of us will be there for the Halloween parade as we anticipate a similar reaction this year.

Any information given to John in a large auditorium is going to be greatly distorted for him. If assemblies are given to impart important school rules, or similar information, it would be good after the assembly to have his aide find a quiet setting to review the information.

**Most important of all**  
   
John is a young boy who has begun to recognize his differences, but he really wants to fit in. He knows that his ears don’t work right, and he wants to do what he can to make them work better. He desperately wants friends, but has been shut out of the social world due to lack of social skills and impaired comprehension of speech. He is very open to coaching and will sincerely try to understand and implement social suggestions he is given. He does not understand teasing or mean behavior in others, and may lack the ability to stand up for himself.

His favorite subjects are math and science, and he’s an ace at any puzzle type of project. He struggles with reading, spelling and any form of writing. He loves hands on projects, and will dive into any craft project with gusto.

He is a bright boy who loves to learn and truly puts in a fabulous effort. Keep in mind that he does many hours of extra therapy every week that other children do not have to do, so there may be days that his effort in class my not appear 100%. He responds well to positive reinforcement, but there might be days he’ll need to be given a little leeway.