



# National Center *for* Learning Disabilities

*The power to hope, to learn, and to succeed*

## Auditory Processing Disorders

### In Detail



There are several different ways the brain processes auditory information. If there is a weakness in a particular kind of auditory processing, it may be observed through specific types of behavior.

Below is an explanation of the different types of auditory processing. Each category also includes:

- Possible difficulties that can occur if there is a weakness in that area
- Possible strategies that may help overcome the difficulties.

Be aware that weakness can occur in one or more category at the same time.

It is important to note that many people without any kind of auditory processing disorder experience problems with learning and behavior from time to time. However, if a person consistently displays difficulties with these tasks over time, testing for auditory processing disorders by trained professionals should be considered.

### Auditory Discrimination

**The Skill:** The ability to notice, compare and distinguish the distinct and separate sounds in words. This skill is vital for reading.

#### Difficulties Observed:

- Learning to read
- Distinguishing difference between similar sounds. Example: Seventy and seventeen
- Understanding spoken language, following directions and remembering details
- Seems to hear but not listen

#### Types of Helpful Strategies:

- Practice rhyming, segmenting words into syllables, segmenting compound words, sound-blending and using similar sounding words (like obvious/oblivious).
- Talk to student at a slow pace.
- Give student one task at a time.

### Auditory Figure-Ground Discrimination

**The Skill:** The ability to pick out important sounds from a noisy background

#### Difficulties Observed:

- Distinguishing meaningful sounds from background noise
- Staying focused on auditory information being given. Example: following verbal directions

#### Types of Helpful Strategies:

- Provide seating near audio source. Example: front of the class or near a video monitor
- Eliminate unnecessary background noise during tasks. Example: TV, stereo, outdoor noise

(continued)

## Auditory Memory

**The Skill:** There are two kinds of auditory memory:

- Long-term auditory memory is the ability to remember something heard some time ago
- Short-term auditory memory is the ability to recall something heard very recently

**Difficulties Observed:**

- \* Remembering people's names
- \* Memorizing telephone numbers
- \* Following multi-step directions
- \* Recalling stories or songs

**Types of Helpful Strategies:**

- Offer written material to accompany lectures.
- Strengthen note-taking skills.
- Provide visual cues to differentiate information-for example, using different colored chalks to emphasize the most important material on the board or hand signals when moving on to another topic.

## Auditory Sequencing

**The Skill:** The ability to understand and recall the order of words

**Difficulties Observed:**

- Confusing multi-digit numbers, such as 74 and 47
- Confusing lists and other types of sequences
- Remembering the correct order of a series of instructions

**Types of Helpful Strategies:**

- Provide written materials to accompany verbal instruction.
- Use images or gestures to reinforce understanding and memory of a sequence or list.

