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SUGGESTIONS FOR MANAGING CHILDREN WITH AUDITORY PROCESSING DISORDERS IN THE CLASSROOM

Children with auditory processing disorders can have difficulty in any situation in which the signal they are listening to is degraded. This means that they will have difficulty when there is background noise, when the person speaking is more than 6 feet away, when the person is not facing them, and when the person has a foreign accent or does not speak clearly. The following suggestions may be helpful.

IMPROVING THE CHILD'S AUDITORY SKILLS

1. Use an FM listening system in the classroom and in other difficult listening situations to reduce the negative effects of distance and competing noise. An FM system is a listening system in which the teacher wears a close microphone and the child wears a radio receiver. The child will hear the teacher as if s/he were standing next to his /her ear in a room with no background noise.
2. If the child is receiving speech therapy the therapist may be able to assist with practice listening in noise and in increasing auditory memory.
3. Consider a systematic program of auditory training to improve auditory processing and auditory attention

MODIFYING THE ENVIRONMENT

1. Select a quiet classroom if possible. It should face a quiet street and not face traffic or be near toilets, stairway, gymnasium, or the lunchroom.
2. Use acoustic treatment such as carpeting on the floor and acoustic tiles on the ceiling. If carpeting cannot be installed in the entire room at least put it in especially noisy places like the block corner.
3. All chairs and movable tables should have rubber stoppers to reduce noise.
4. Seat the child close to the teacher and allow the child to change his/her seat if the teacher moves around the room. Be certain s/he can see the teacher's face so s/he can use visual cues.
5. Whenever possible, seating should be away from the window or doorway, or any noisy equipment (ie. audiovisual equipment.)

MODIFYING TEACHING STYLE

1. Write information and homework in handouts or on the blackboard so the child does not have to rely on listening to get the correct assignment.
2. Check with the child to be certain that s/he understands. Repeat or rephrase if necessary.
3. If necessary, consider pre-teaching some of the classroom materials to reduce listening in the classroom.
4. Whenever possible, speech and other therapies, and individual or small group teaching should take place outside of the classroom in a quiet room to maximize their benefit by reducing the interference from competing noise etc.
5. Give the child some "time out" during the day when listening is not required. This will reduce the stress of listening.
6. Children may need extended test taking time, and individualized test directions.
7. Older children may benefit from use of a tape recorder or a note taker to record classroom activities.

For more information on auditory processing disorders contact
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