

Auditory Processing Guidance

Auditory processing is a somewhat confusing term that has been thrown around so much that it has become almost meaningless. Depending on whom you are speaking to, you will obtain a different definition of the term. For our purposes, auditory processing will refer to such areas as auditory attending (focusing attention to listen to speech), auditory memory (remembering what was said), auditory discrimination (hearing the difference between speech sounds), selective attending (listening to the speaker and tuning out background noise), and auditory sequencing (recalling what was heard first, second, third).

Difficulties in these areas are not considered by themselves to be communication problems. In other words, if a child has a problem in one of these areas, but does not meet our eligibility criteria, we do not consider him to have a significant communication problem. Auditory processing by itself is not a qualifying category for Speech-Language or Special Education at this time. Auditory processing is, however, clearly recognized as an important factor in language acquisition and development. If the student demonstrates a communication problem for which **auditory processing skills are a component of the problem**, and meets criteria for services, auditory processing can appropriately be integrated as a component within therapy activities that target the overall communication problem. Research indicates that the best way to address most auditory processing difficulties involves teaching the student compensatory strategies. Sound discrimination skills specifically may be remediated through a variety of interventions.