

Auditory Processing Differences in School

Information for schools, parents, carers and young people

Plan and prepare

- Talk about and warn the child for loud noises where possible e.g. school bells or fire alarms. Use soft, calm communication.
- Use the calming and regulating before and after expected loud noises to support keeping the child in a 'just right' state of alert and calm

Changes to the environment

- Consider surrounding noise levels and reduce auditory stimuli in and around the classroom. Consider competing noises such as a radio, another person talking, children tapping, clicking pens, sharpening pencils or an open window. Can these be reduced or the child or young person positioned away from them?
- Provide a quiet corner in the classroom that reduces the exposure to noise and movement. Use a small sensory tent with calming tools inside, if appropriate.
- Use a privacy board / shield to reduce surrounding noises.

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- Make attempts to reduce reverberation within the classroom; the amount sound echoes or bounces off smooth walls, floors and ceilings. Adding room dividers, bookshelves, acoustic tiles, carpet, wall hangings and bulletin boards can reduce reverberation in the classroom

Access to quieter spaces.

- Can the child or young person go on an errand when the class is changing tasks, to avoid the sound of desks and chairs scraping and other children's chatter. Or can they use an 'out of class pass' for busier, noisy times?
- Lunchtimes, assemblies and PE can all be loud busy environments, so can the child or young person stay in a quieter area of the hall or just outside the noisy room?
- Can the child or young person come into school a few minutes early or late to avoid the busy noise when entering and exiting school? Can they use a quieter entrance?
- Can the child or young person be enabled to use an individual or accessible toilet area to avoid unexpected hand dryer or flushing noises?

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Ear defenders

- Can ear defenders, ear loops or noise cancelling headphones for certain activities? (being cautious not to use them all the time and being aware of safety and communication- e.g. Can traffic noises be heard when crossing roads? Can the child still hear you talking?)
- Can ear muffs or head bands be used to muffle some of the sound but still allow the child/young person to hear?

What if a child or young person doesn't seem to hear or listen?

- If the child or young person is under-responsive and not registering noise they may need additional support to hear and focus. Can you position them near the source of information e.g. near the smart board or blackboard. Or provide them with written or pictorial instructions to supplement verbal instructions. Can you call their name to ensure you have their attention before giving any instructions?
- It is always useful to have hearing check with your health provider to rule out any hearing difficulties.

Scan the QR code to watch our video support for children and young people with sensory processing differences



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