



AUDITORY

What is it?

Auditory processing refers to how the brain recognises and makes sense of sounds. Sounds consist of loudness, pitch, how long it lasts for and where it is coming from. We automatically put all of this information together and respond appropriately to it. Children who do not process this information accurately may over-respond or under-respond to sounds.

Problems you may see: over-responding

- ✚ Puts hands over their ears in reaction to noise levels.
- ✚ Overreacts to sounds that others barely notice.
- ✚ Unable to tune out background noises, eg a fan.
- ✚ May hum or make noises to themselves to drown out sounds.

Strategies to help: over-responding

- ✚ Respect the child's sensitivities (to some children sounds are perceived to be painful).
- ✚ Try to forewarn the child before noises occur, eg approaching fire engines when out and about.
- ✚ Allow the child to wear headphones or earplugs when there is expected to be excess noise in the room.
- ✚ Reduce extraneous noise or wait until it has gone before giving instructions. Do not expect a child to concentrate when there is a lot of noise going on.
- ✚ Reduce background noise.
- ✚ Encourage movement activities on a regular basis as movement helps the auditory system process sounds. Play movement games that involve music and listening, eg musical statues.
- ✚ Provide your child with a fiddle toy that they like to help them focus on their other senses.
- ✚ If you know you are going somewhere particularly noisy, take a buggy and blanket with you that your child can use as a safe space.
- ✚ Before going somewhere that you know is going to be particularly noisy, eg restaurant or cinema, go to the park first so your child can engage in proprioceptive and vestibular activities to help prepare the auditory system.





Problems you may see: under-responding

- 🚩 The child speaks in a loud voice.
- 🚩 The child hums to themselves.
- 🚩 The child seems to ignore you when you call their name even though you know they heard you.

Strategies to help: under-responding

- 🚩 Only speak to the child when they are facing you.
- 🚩 Give simple instructions – don't use too many words.
- 🚩 Ask the child to repeat the instruction to you.
- 🚩 Wait for the child to process the information and respond which may take them longer.

