

Central Auditory Processing (CAP) Management Tips for Parents

Parents of a child with a central auditory processing disorder (CAPD) face many challenges. The management process will be much easier when parents can accept that their child may have a style of learning and listening that is different from other children. The following are some suggestions to assist parents with the management process.

- Learn as much as possible about CAPD and the nature of your child's deficits. Be knowledgeable about your child's individual strengths and weaknesses. This will assist you in effectively implementing management strategies.
- Really listen to your child. Simplify your language if your child does not seem to understand. Enjoy communicating during your time together.
- Really talk with your child for a few minutes each day. Give your child your full attention and listen carefully. You will learn more about your child's processing deficit(s) as well as the strategies your child is using to cope and compensate.
- Be honest with your child and take a positive approach. Avoid saying there is nothing wrong. Help your child understand that he or she may learn a little differently than other children. Stress that you are there to help him or her learn.
- Have a specific time each day to work alone with your child. You will have greater success in communicating with your child if there are no competing activities (e.g., other children or adults laughing or talking, television or stereo playing, dishwasher or vacuum cleaner running).
- Gain your child's visual as well as auditory attention before proceeding with a conversation. Your child will get information from watching as well as listening.
- Start with short work periods and gradually increase time. A good rule is to stop when your child is at the peak of success. Avoid pushing your child to the point of frustration.
- It is important to be as objective and patient as possible. Speak to your child in a quiet, firm voice.
- Give short and simple directions. When necessary, divide multi-step instructions into brief, logical steps. Allow your child time to complete each step before proceeding to the next part. *Example: Put your homework in your backpack. Make your bed. Brush your teeth. Put on your shoes.*
- A child with a CAPD may seem to hear inconsistently. If your child seems to hear some things but not others, do not assume that your child is purposely ignoring you. Ask your child to repeat or paraphrase the directions to check for understanding.
- If a task is too difficult for your child, move on to something easier. Then return to the first task after changing it so that your child can be successful.
- Encourage your child to ask for information to be repeated if he or she does not understand. Encourage your child to use compensatory strategies learned in school to help complete tasks.
- Help your child become independent in carrying out daily routines. Use a card with pictures or key words to assist in sequencing tasks (e.g., getting ready for school, preparing for bedtime, cleaning the bedroom, setting the table).
- Insist that your child complete activities when he or she is capable of doing them. Make sure that your expectations are reasonable.

- Praise your child for even the smallest success and do not emphasize failures. It is not helpful to compare your child's performance to that of other children.
- Slow down your rate of speech and pause between utterances if your child continues to have trouble understanding.
- If you have to repeat something for your child, try to rephrase it in a different way (e.g., different words, different type of sentence).
- Children with a CAPD often need extra time to organize their thoughts and process information. Allow your child adequate time to process information and respond.
- Avoid having discussions when you and your child are in separate rooms. A child with a CAPD processes information more easily when both visual and auditory information is available.
- Your child may need time to rest and recuperate after school. Allow time for realization before asking your child to do homework or chores.
- Help your child create a quiet study area away from noise and distractions such as windows or doorways.
- Read aloud to your child and discuss what you have read.
- Your child may have difficulty processing information when upset or excited. Help your child to calm down by speaking in short clear sentences. If discipline is required, use simple sentences with clearly stated cause-and-effect explanations. At a later time you may explain the situation in greater detail.
- Ask the audiologist, speech-language pathologist, or other professionals for a list of listening activities and strategies that can be done at home. Then practice improving your child's listening skills.

References

Boswell, 1988; Colorado Department of Education, 1997; Educational Audiology Association, 1996; Edwards, 1991; Johnson, Benson & Seaton, 1997; Keith, 1996; Mayer, 1996; Strand & West, 1994; Truesdale, 1990.