

Language Processing Disorders

What is a language processing disorder?

A Language Processing Disorder (LPD) (also called Auditory Processing Disorder) is characterized by difficulty understanding and making sense of what is heard. It is different from hearing loss or deafness. Children with LPD may have normal hearing; however, their brains do not process or interpret auditory information correctly.

LPD sometimes occurs with speech and language difficulties, learning disabilities, attention deficits, and developmental disabilities. Children with LPD may have difficulty hearing the differences between sounds in words, even when the sounds are clear and loud enough to be heard. These problems may become more apparent when the child is in a noisy environment, such as a classroom. LPD is broken down into different categories of problems. Often times, children have difficulty in only one area. It is possible for children with LPD to have problems in more than one area.



What causes a Language Processing Disorder?

LPD is a neurological problem, but the exact cause is often unknown. LPD affects the skills that are needed to deal with auditory information. Those skills include attention, memory, following directions, learning, and hearing.

What are the characteristics of a Language Processing Disorder?

Children with LPD often have difficulty in the following areas:

- following multi-step directions
- paying attention in noisy environments
- following spoken directions
- rhyming, reading, spelling, and writing
- understanding and participating in conversations with peers and adults
- vocabulary and sentence structure

What is the treatment for a language processing disorder?

Treatment for LPD includes therapy that is based on the child's individual needs. Therapy often focuses on improving listening skills and developing strategies that the child can use to be successful learners at school and in the community. Computer programs, assistive listening devices and changes to the environment are used to improve the processing skills of children with LPD. A team that includes a speech-language pathologist, audiologist, teacher, and pediatrician is important in improving the outcome of a child diagnosed with LPD.

What can parents do to help?

- Give simple and direct instructions
- Reduce background noise at home
- Get the child's attention before giving directions
- Speak clearly while facing the child
- Use pictures to support what is being said
- Ask the child to restate what is heard
- Provide predictable routines for daily living

Websites on (central) Language Processing Disorder:

- LDonline: <http://www.ldonline.org>
- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association: www.asha.org
- American Academy of Audiology: www.audiology.org
- LD Resources: <http://www.ldresources.org>
- Learning Disabilities Association of America: <http://ldaamerica.org/>
- National Center for Learning Disabilities.: <http://www.nclld.org>

For more information, please contact the Division of Speech Pathology at (513) 636-4341 or visit our website at www.cincinnatichildrens.org/speech.