

University of Canterbury Children's Auditory Processing Clinic

Experienced audiologists and speech-language therapists work together in assessing a child's listening difficulties, and coordinate referrals to other relevant health professionals as required.

The assessment process involves assessing hearing, language, cognition and auditory processing skills. Assessment is typically conducted over two or three sessions of 1–2 hours in length. Management and recommendations are then discussed in person upon conclusion of the final assessment. Please contact our clinic for current fees.

What sort of treatments are available for APD?

Unfortunately there is no known cure for APD. However, a formalised assessment often brings a sense of relief to parents of children with APD, as it helps them to understand why their children are struggling at school.

It also means we can make some specific recommendations to help the child compensate for their listening difficulties. These recommendations will vary according to the specific difficulties a child has, but in our clinic, may include:

- Communication strategies, for use in the classroom and at home
- Listening devices – personal FM systems or classroom-based soundfield systems
- Phonological awareness training with a speech-language therapist, to help with specific reading and spelling difficulties
- Computer-based hearing training programs

How to contact us

If you feel that your child has listening difficulties and would like a formal assessment, please contact the Children's Auditory Processing Clinic during business hours to make an appointment.

Clinical Reception

T: +64 3 369 3133

F: +64 3 364 2760

Email: clinic@cmds.canterbury.ac.nz

We are located in the Department of Communication Disorders, in the Geography building. The clinical reception is on Level 1, accessed through the Arts Road entrance.

A map showing our location and the location of available parking can be found at www.cmds.canterbury.ac.nz/clinicalservices.shtml



APD.



Children's Auditory Processing Clinic



Why would a child with normal hearing and intelligence have these problems?

- Poor listening skills
- Difficulty understanding in noisy environments
- Difficulty staying focused and concentrating, especially in a noisy room
- Trouble remembering and paying attention to information presented to them verbally; needing more time to process information
- Problems carrying out multi-step instructions
- Difficulty expressing themselves clearly
- Trouble locating sounds
- Difficulty with reading, spelling, comprehension and vocabulary

It may be that he or she is experiencing auditory processing difficulties.



Children with auditory processing difficulties (often referred to as **Auditory Processing Disorder**, or **APD**) have normally functioning ears, and so are able to HEAR sounds well, but have a lot of difficulty when it comes to LISTENING or understanding what they hear.

The ears are not the cause for challenges in these children – rather it is the way the brain processes and interprets sound that is the difficulty.

For example, children with APD may have trouble recognising subtle differences between speech sounds in words, even though the sounds themselves are loud and clear.

These kinds of difficulties are even more likely to occur in noisy environments, like classrooms, or when a child is listening to complex information, such as trying to follow a conversation, or complex instructions.



How is APD assessed?

Because of the complexity of APD and related language and learning problems which share similar characteristics, a team of professionals is often required to identify what may be contributing to a child's listening and learning difficulties.

Professionals may include:

- An **audiologist**, to assess hearing and auditory processing skills using specialised audiological tests.
- A **speech-language therapist**, to assess how well language is used and understood, and to screen cognitive ability. Further literacy skills may also be assessed.
- The **classroom teacher**, to monitor behaviour and implement learning and coping strategies in the classroom.
- An **educational psychologist**, to assess memory, learning and attention.
- An **optometrist**, to assess visual function.
- A **medical practitioner**, to attend to any medical aspects of a child's listening or learning difficulties.