

Developing Listening Skills

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Auditory processing is how we take in information presented to us via sound. These skills are essentially invisible. After hearing a sound, we consider what was heard and put meaning to it. We don't always know when someone has auditory processing issues, until we converse or interact for a bit of time. It's possible each one of us has weaknesses in this area at some time or other, such as when conversing in a noisy restaurant. The messages conveyed may not be fully understood. Direction following is an element within auditory processing. After hearing a direction, we think about (or process) what was said, then typically make a choice to carry out the direction or not. The following are ideas to strengthen auditory processing and/or direction following.

- Be sure to have listener's full attention. Gaining eye contact can assure this, in most cases.
- Be close in proximity, not across the room.
- Limit distractions relating to sounds and visual activity as much as possible.
- Keep in mind that some people need to fidget, move, doodle, etc. to help them focus. Respect that.
- State clearly and succinctly, enunciating carefully. Note that speaking loudly doesn't always achieve these factors.
- Use language age appropriate for the listener, relating to what they know, making connections when possible.
- Repeat a message when it feels necessary.
- Sometimes rewording a message may get the point across better. Use synonyms when possible.
- If it feels comfortable, ask the listener to repeat a question or direction. This assures accuracy in hearing and listening.
- Wait patiently, quietly and respectfully.
- Try not to bombard with question after question or lots of information with no time for the listener to process in-between.
- Gestures or visual aids may strengthen a message.

*Everyone wants to be heard.
Everyone wants to be understood.
Listening and speaking are tantamount to being human.
Communication keeps us together and
makes us strong.*

