Our Experience with Auditory Processing Difficulties

*Written by *Sarah's Mother*

Our experience with our daughter has taught us that auditory processing difficulties can affect so much more than simply what a child can hear. Finding the right support for her has been a process of understanding how she takes in and processes information and then finding interventions that meet those individual needs.

Since beginning treatment with low-gain hearing aids, we have noticed meaningful changes in her ability to access and process what is being said to her. She seems less overwhelmed by listening, and we have seen improvements in her ability to participate and perform in everyday situations. The difference has been especially meaningful to us as parents because we see how much effort she puts into listening and keeping up.

One of the moments that really showed us the difference came shortly after she received her low-gain hearing aids. We ran into one of her classmates at a local restaurant, which was a very loud environment. Her audiologist had created a special setting on her hearing aids specifically for loud places, so I was able to switch her to that setting. She was able to sit with her classmate and carry on a full conversation without becoming overwhelmed by the noise around her. As her parent, seeing her comfortably participate in that conversation was incredibly meaningful. It was something that could have easily become overwhelming for her before, and instead she was simply able to be a kid and enjoy being with a friend.

One of the biggest things we have learned is that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to APD. What works for one child may not work for another. We have found it incredibly important that every member of our daughter's educational and medical team look at her as a whole child and consider the full picture of who she is, rather than looking at one diagnosis, test result, or area of difficulty in isolation. Every child is different, and understanding that individual child is essential to finding the right supports.

As parents of a child with APD, we also believe it is incredibly important to advocate for our children—not only at home, but in school and in every environment where they are expected to learn and participate. Our children may not always be able to explain why something is difficult for them, so we must be willing to listen, ask questions, learn as much as we can, and advocate for the supports they need to be successful.

For our family, having professionals like Dr. Savannah Johnson who was willing to look at our daughter as an individual and work together to find a treatment approach tailored to her needs has made a meaningful difference in both her performance and our day-to-day life. Most importantly, it has given us a better understanding of how to support her and help her feel successful.