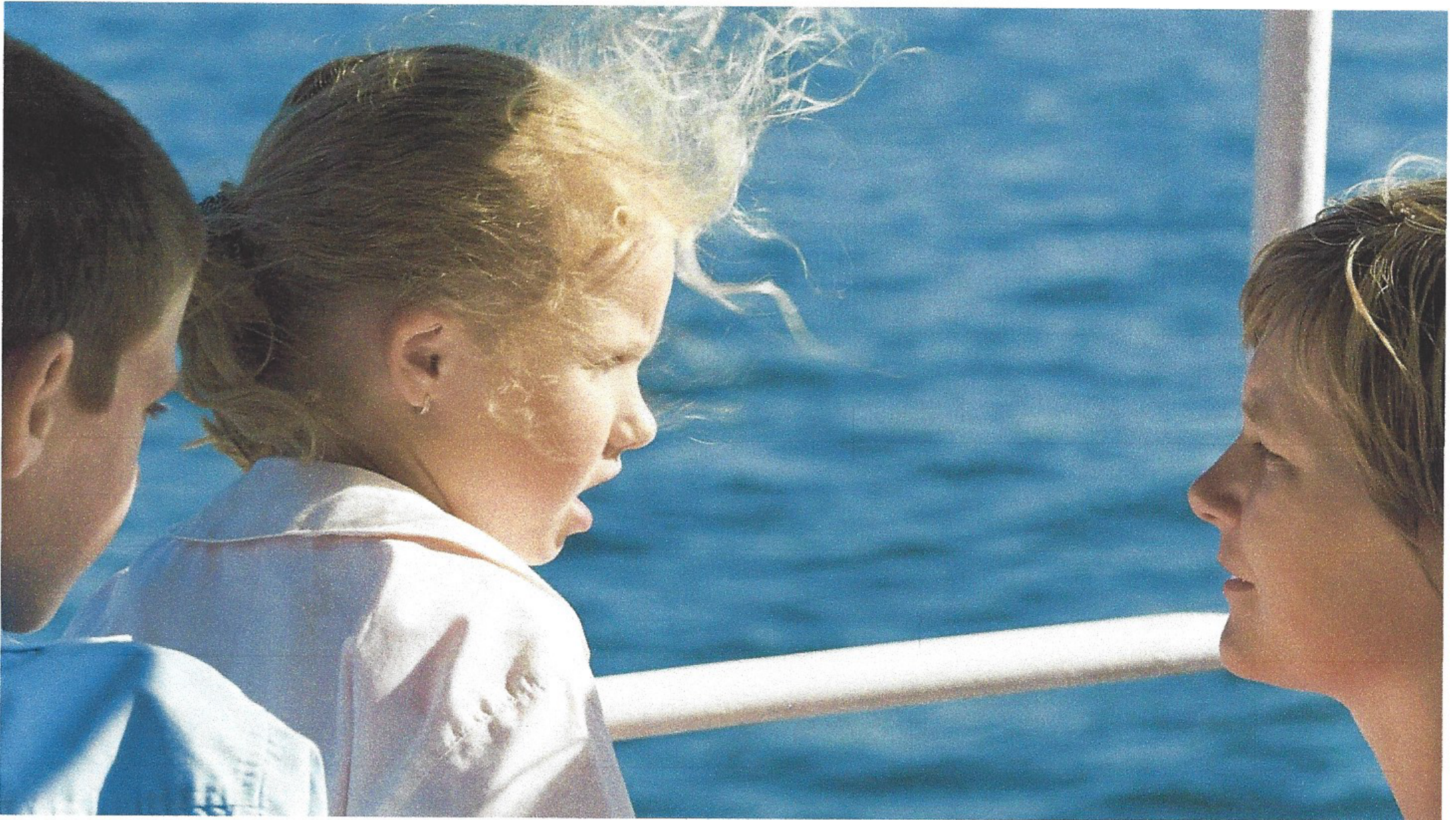


5 Common Myths About Auditory Processing Disorder

By The Understood Team

In recent years, researchers have made huge strides toward understanding auditory processing disorder (APD). More and more children are being diagnosed with APD and successfully treated. Yet many misconceptions about APD persist. Here are five common myths—and the truth about each.



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Myth #1: Auditory processing disorder is the same thing as being hard of hearing.

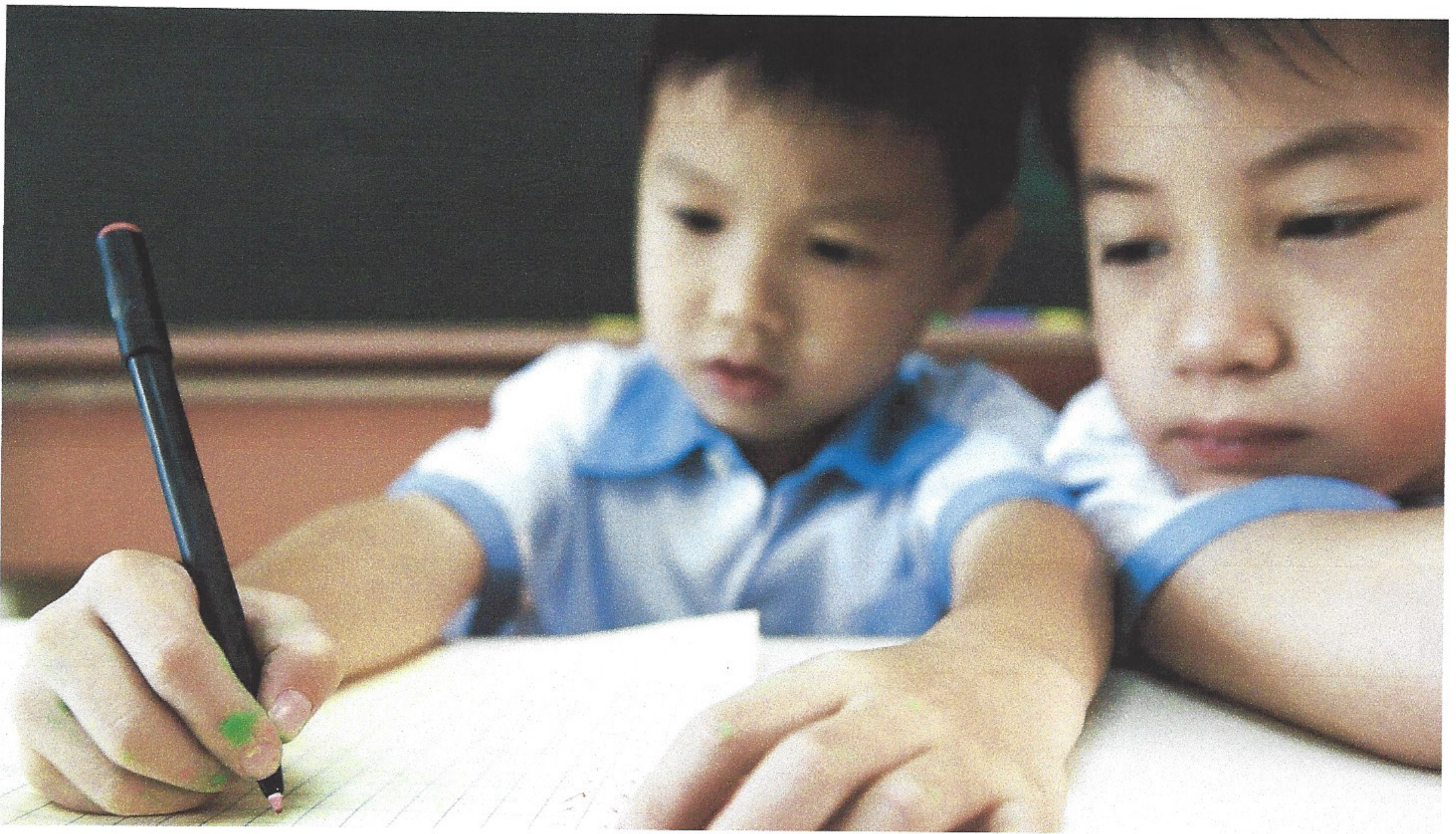
Fact: Most people with APD have no hearing loss. Speaking loudly to them won't help them understand what you've said. Scientists aren't exactly sure what causes APD. Typically, the brain processes sounds seamlessly and almost instantaneously, so people can interpret what they hear. But for people with APD, an issue in the central nervous system delays or scrambles the process. As a result, they frequently confuse sounds and words. To them, "Do you want to sit in the chair?" might sound like "Do you want to sit in the hair?"



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Myth #2: Auditory processing disorder is extremely rare.

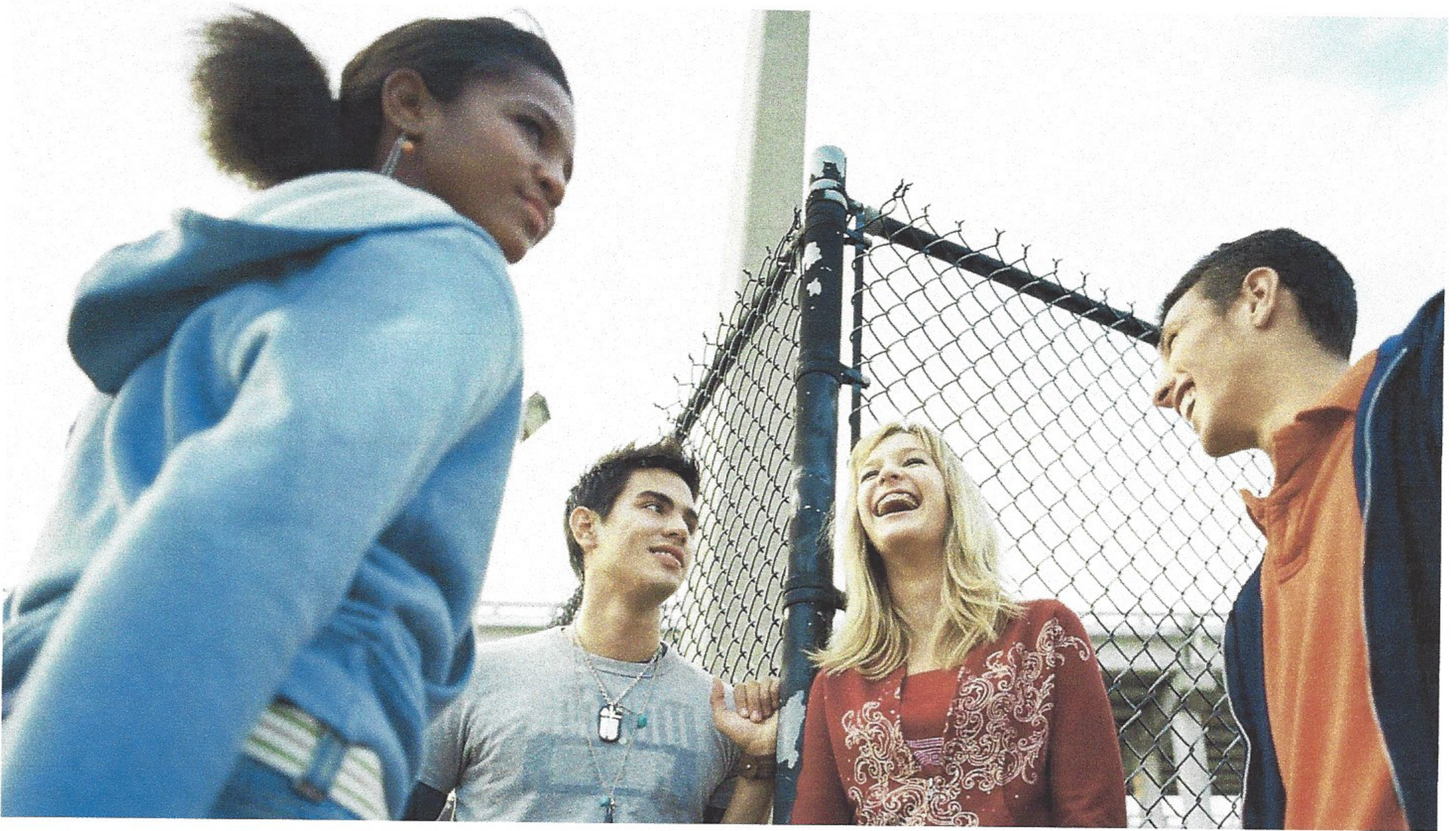
Fact: Although more research needs to be done to determine how common APD is, estimates range from as low as 2 percent of U.S. children to as high as 7 percent. Research also suggests that many kids with learning issues might have an undiagnosed auditory processing disorder. A 2009 study found that 43 percent of children with learning issues also had APD; 25 percent of those children also had dyslexia.



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Myth #3: Kids with auditory processing disorder are less intelligent than their peers.

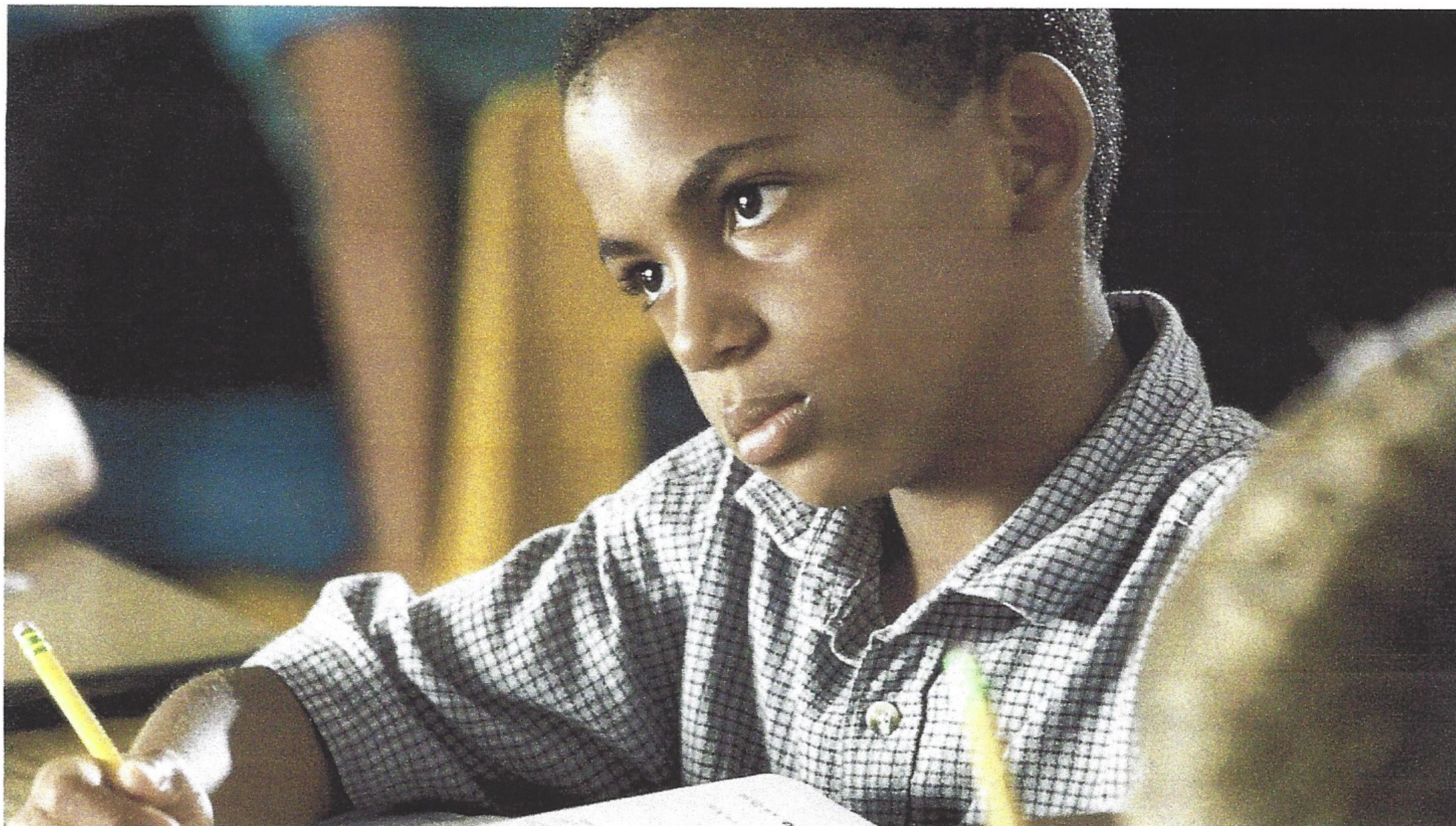
Fact: APD is not connected to a child's intelligence. In fact, most kids with learning and attention issues have average to above-average intelligence. It's true, though, that children with APD may score lower on verbal IQ tests than their peers do. They also can *appear* to be "slow"—taking longer to respond to questions and pick up new concepts. But this isn't because they're less intelligent. It's because they have difficulty processing and interpreting new sounds.



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Myth #4: Auditory processing disorder isn't real; it's just a new name for ADHD.

Fact: People with APD and ADHD often show similar symptoms, including being easily distracted and inattentive. There's believed to be a high rate of co-occurrence with ADHD, meaning many children identified with APD also are diagnosed with ADHD. But research shows that while kids with ADHD struggle with attention in all kinds of settings, children with APD are much more likely to have attention issues specifically in the auditory realm. They can have difficulty hearing when there's background noise. They may struggle to follow oral instructions and have poor listening skills.



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Myth #5: Children with auditory processing disorder are lazy and rude.

Fact: Kids with APD have trouble processing auditory information. Because of this, they might appear to be ignoring others. They might give incorrect or unrelated answers to questions they mishear. And they may have trouble completing projects or chores, especially if the tasks were assigned orally and required multiple steps. These behaviors might seem like laziness or rudeness, but they're most likely not.



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