

## Editorial

# Diagnosing Auditory Processing Disorders



**T**he reality of auditory processing disorders (APDs) in children can no longer be doubted. There is mounting evidence that, in spite of normal hearing sensitivity, a fundamental deficit in the processing of auditory information may underlie problems in understanding speech in the presence of background noise, in understanding degraded speech, in following spoken instructions, or in discriminating and identifying speech sounds. The challenge to the audiologist is the accurate diagnosis of the disorder. But rising interest in APD has been accompanied by mounting concern in two areas: first, the realization that children may fail auditory tests for a variety of nonauditory reasons, and second, the tendency to diagnose the disorder when the child fails only a screening test rather than a systematic battery of diagnostic measures.

Such concerns led to the organization of a Consensus Conference on the Diagnosis of Auditory Processing Disorders in School-Aged Children, held at the Callier Center for Com-

munication Disorders, the University of Texas at Dallas, from April 27–29, 2000. The conferees sought a consensus on the problems of accurate screening and diagnosis for APD. In spite of the daunting nature of the task, a number of important recommendations emerged from the deliberations. Highlights included

1. Specific recommendations for a workable screening test,
2. A systematic review of the many variables potentially confounding an accurate diagnosis, and
3. A recommended minimal diagnostic test battery for APD.

In this issue of *JAAA*, we are pleased to present the full text of the consensus document. Readers are urged to study it in detail.

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