

# Developing Strong Auditory Skills

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## **Challenges And Changes**

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THE MOST IMPORTANT aspects of our children's learning success or difficulty must include strong auditory skills. I am continuing to learn, myself, about the development of good auditory skills and not only how that takes place, but also how we can be sure our child has the best auditory skills possible. There are some specific things that keep our children from properly developing those auditory skills.

In the past our society as a whole was very well equipped to develop good auditory skills in our young people. Our parents spent a lot of time talking to us, reading aloud to us, discussing various topics at the dinner table [even if we were merely the listeners], and directing us as we listened to the old time radio shows [dramas and other entertaining programs, news, etc.]. We learned to use our imaginations to create the characters and scenes in our minds.

Today's child is much more oriented to developing good visual skills as we

have changed our forms of entertainment, media, and communication. Television has become the one-eyed monster that presents everything under the sun, in living color, 24 hours a day. I'm sure many of you readers have severely limited, or even eliminated the viewing of television in your homes as programs have become more and more a reflection of secular values, temporal goals, and ungodly speech and actions. Yet, for many of our children, when they are in a room with a TV on, their eyes become glued to the set and they become very selective in what they hear—you could have a three-alarm fire in your living room and they would not notice if it didn't cause a power failure that interfered with reception.

When public education began it was designed in such a way as to teach to the auditory learner, and it worked well for many years. Unfortunately for the visual learners, our basic educational approach has not changed much and we still teach by lecture or oral presentations a great percentage of the time. The visual learner is obviously at quite a disadvantage in this kind of setting.

One of the other problems is that a large percentage of children under two years of age have ear infections, sinus infections, allergies, colds, etc. that can cause fluid to accumulate behind the ear drum in the middle ear. Any of these difficulties can cause a hearing loss and/or inconsistent hearing for long periods of time. This can affect the development of speech by delaying it or by limiting the communication skills that child will develop in his early years. According to some researchers, nearly half of all they ever learn will be gained by the time our child reaches the age of 5. Spending even part of that time with limited hearing could be devastating to a child's speech development as well as to his overall auditory function. Children are frequently labeled "developmentally delayed" for no other reason than that there seems to be no specific cause for that child to be more than two years behind the development of his peers. When this occurs, an investigation could show that these children had extensive temporary hearing difficulties during their early years. Many of the infections or the nasal/sinus congestions seem to be related to an allergy to milk and other dairy products, and one can sometimes see obvious improvements by eliminating these or other allergy related foods.

Why are auditory skills so important? There is a significant correlation between how well your child can process sequentially and language function.