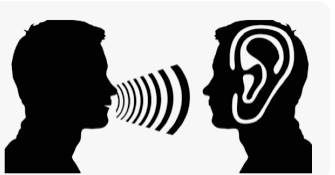


**Counselor’s Corner Newsletter- April 2023**



**One of the reasons can be poor Active listening and Processing Speed.**

**Whilst this may be their presenting behaviours, there is often a deeper underlying explanation.**

**Processing Speed can be simply explained as the speed in which the brain receives, understands, and responds to information. This can be further categorized into:**

* **Verbal Processing (that is, “Listening”)**
* **Visual Processing**
* **Motor Processing**
* **Academic Processing**
* **General Problems with Processing Speed**

**Processing speed deficits in one or more areas often lead to deficits in general areas of functioning. It can mean that a child needs more time to complete many—if not most—tasks. A child may often look confused or appear absentminded because he is unable to process information at the rate it’s being delivered.**

**Some children may actually avoid engaging in difficult tasks altogether or not get started on new tasks because they are aware they cannot get the job done in the amount of time allotted, and therefore feel defeated before they even begin.**

**Conversely some kids cope with these deficits by rushing through their work; they may finish a test quickly and turn it in even though they haven’t answered each question thoroughly. The work might not be completed correctly, but the student feels a sense of accomplishment because he wasn’t the last one done.**

**The Effects of Slow Processing Speed**

Some children may experience problems with processing speed in that they have:

Difficulty processing spoken information fluently or automatically:

Problems listening to a lecture and taking in all the material presented

Remembering and following simple directions from a teacher

Listening and understanding verbal information presented in class from fellow students

Problems writing information down on paper:

Writing an assignment in a notebook

Finishing an exam

Slower reading fluency skills:

Having difficulty reading a certain passage in a given period of time during class time or during exams Difficulty finishing large reading assignments

Trouble sustaining attention to a task, not necessarily because the child has attention problems, but because the information is coming at her so quickly that her attention is “lost”

Difficulty understanding complex directions, particularly those that are given quickly

Trouble retrieving information quickly from long-term memory. This becomes problematic when a child is called on in class and can’t answer the question quickly enough—even though he knows the answer! Problems finishing almost anything (tests, assignments, activities) in an allotted period of time Problems with social interactions because the “social scene” moves too quickly to process (includes not just verbal information but nonverbal information that has to be processed quickly).

**Why is our child is not doing well?**

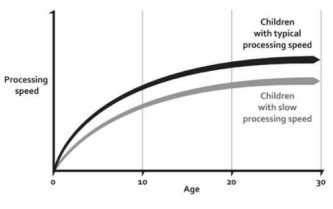
**One of the main concerns we see with children is how they're often perceived as being inattentive, lacking focus and motivation, and appearing as though they're not listening.**



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* **Remembering and following simple directions from a teacher**
* **Listening and understanding verbal information presented in class from fellow students**
* **Problems writing information down on paper:**
* **Writing an assignment in a notebook**
* **Finishing an exam**
* **Slower reading fluency skills:**
* **Having difficulty reading a certain passage in a given period of time during class time or during exams Difficulty finishing large reading assignments**
* **Trouble sustaining attention to a task, not necessarily because the child has attention problems, but because the information is coming at her so quickly that her attention is “lost”**
* **Difficulty understanding complex directions, particularly those that are given quickly**
* **Trouble retrieving information quickly from long-term memory. This becomes problematic when a child is called on in class and can’t answer the question quickly enough—even though he knows the answer! Problems finishing almost anything (tests, assignments, activities) in an allotted period of time Problems with social interactions because the “social scene” moves too quickly to process (includes not just verbal information but nonverbal information that has to be processed quickly).**

**The Effects of Slow Processing Speed**



**Ironically, some children with slow processing speed may not be 'slow' with everything. In fact, a child with high innate potential may be performing at an average speed relative to their age. However, what we see is that the child's speed acts as a barrier to learning, and as a result, the child may not be able to reach their innate potential.**

**Nonetheless, knowing your child has difficulties with their processing speed is important. Understanding where and how to support your child gives them the opportunity to thrive in an environment they may otherwise struggle in. Whilst their speed may never 'catch up' with their peers, the use of standardized testing to assess a child's processing speed can be helpful in providing in-class support and academic concessions for in-class and external exams, assignments and tests. These can include accommodations such as use of a word processor, extra time and a separate invigilation space, depending on the needs of the child.**

**Further reading:**

* **Braaten, Ellen:**
* **Willoughby Brian: Bright kids who can’t keep up pp (17-18)**
* **Guilford Publications**
* **Kindle**

**If you feel that your child is finding it difficult to connect or appreciate your efforts, please do not hesitate to contact the school counselor-Suzie Hachez-** [**suzie.h\_cis@gemsedu.com**](mailto:suzie.h_cis@gemsedu.com) **or make a direct appointment to see her on 052-1067881**

**Research on processing speed has shown that the more times someone repeats a task, the more automatic—and thus quicker—the response becomes. This is why even kids with slow processing speed are quicker than their parents on tasks such as video games and texting on a cell phone. Second, the speed increases are also due to structural changes to the brain that happen naturally as it develops during childhood.**

**These two factors—experience and brain growth—are crucial in increasing processing speed during the childhood and adolescent years. Do most kids speed up? With the exception of children who have significant brain trauma, nearly every child will become faster at most things. The problem is that you, as a parent, might not reap the benefits as the process continues into young adulthood. As the following graph shows, very often the gap with peers never shrinks. In other words, although your child will be faster than he was several years ago, she’ll likely never be faster than her peers. However, adult life deficits in processing are often not a problem because we generally choose vocations and avocations that are well suited to us. The issue going forward in life is to keep expectations for growth realistic while maximising the child’s potential.**