

SOUND

What is this developmental skill?

Sound processing is the brain's ability to interpret, organize, and respond to auditory information. It allows children to understand speech, filter background noise, and remain comfortable in different listening environments.

How does this normally develop?

Children learn to recognize voices, language, music, and environmental sounds through everyday interactions. Repeated conversations, songs, reading, and play strengthen auditory processing throughout childhood.

How can neglect interfere with its development?

Children living in chaotic or unpredictable environments may become highly alert to sounds associated with danger. Others may have had limited language exposure, reducing opportunities for efficient auditory development.

What might this look like?

A child may:

- Cover their ears.
- Become overwhelmed in noisy environments.
- Seem distracted by background sounds.
- Fail to notice when spoken to.
- Startle easily.
- Have difficulty following verbal directions.

Parenting Implications

Reduce unnecessary background noise when possible, provide clear and simple instructions, and recognize that noisy environments may require additional support rather than discipline.

From Understanding to Attunement

Rather than assuming a child is ignoring directions, caregivers can consider whether the child's nervous system is struggling to organize auditory information in that moment.