

# Poor concentration after grommets

We are surrounded by auditory information throughout our lives and it is amazing how we can filter out unwanted background noise to concentrate on a task and yet respond when someone calls our name (the “cocktail party phenomenon\* ”). This ability is probably learnt, rather than innate, and I believe children who have suffered temporary hearing loss due to glue ear often have difficulties in this area, exhibited by poor focussing, poor concentration and poor attention, despite normalised hearing.

My advice to parents has always been to establish eye-to-eye contact and two-way communication before imparting any important information. Ideally, this is then followed by getting the child to repeat whatever instruction is required. I find that this does not need to be continued for too long before things improve.

In the classroom situation, this does require the teachers to place the child in a position where they can easily see them and make certain that they have their attention before giving out any information. Ideally, they should also check that the information has been received. Without this, what happens typically is that when all the class are working and the teacher asks them to close their books, for instance, the child in question will carry on with his/her work. It may even be if the teacher asks him or her whether or not they heard what she said, the child will actually be able to repeat the instruction, proving that he/she has heard it but the brain has not reacted to it.

A similar analogy would be in aviation, where Heathrow Control will establish two-way communication with an incoming aircraft prior to giving a directional command and then receiving confirmation from the incoming jet that the message has been received. The military have been doing this for years!

I hope the above helps. For further professional advice see a child psychologist.

\*[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cocktail\\_party\\_effect](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cocktail_party_effect)