

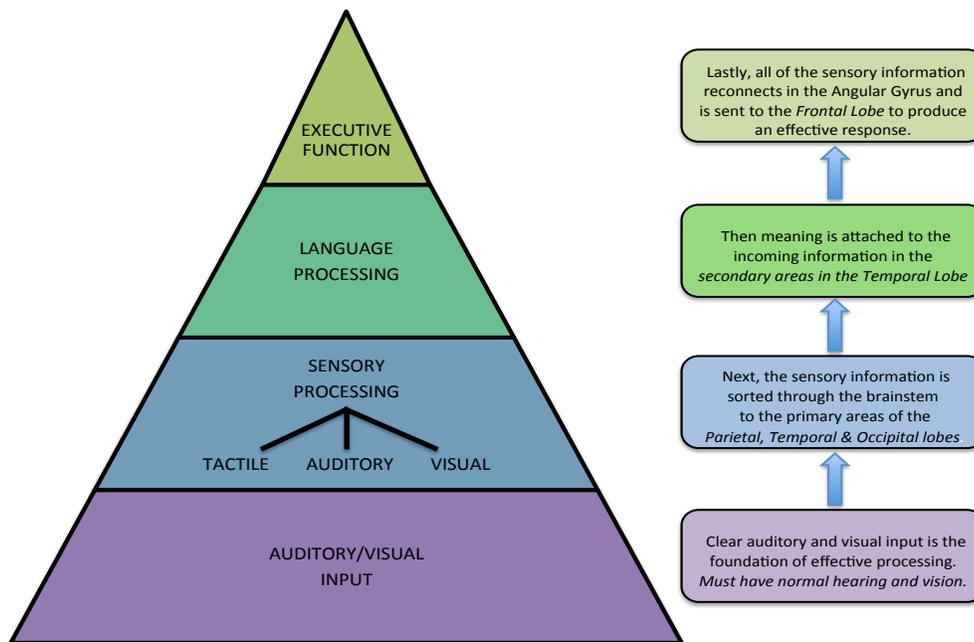


PROCESSING

The Hierarchy of Development and Assessment

Processing is the collaborative effort of multi-sensory information that transitions from input to meaningful understanding and expression. It develops from infancy through childhood upon a specific hierarchy. Breakdowns or interruptions in that development can occur to any one or a multitude of systems at any given time or on several occasions and for reasons that are known or unknown. When it comes to assessing and treating children with suspected processing disorders, it is important to keep in mind the hierarchy for development and treat the most foundational deficits first so that more complex “top tier” skills function more efficiently. If interventions are attempted for top tier skills before the foundation is secure, progress may be slow and/or long term retention of those skills may be compromised since the foundation has holes; just in the same way that you would not want to build a home on an unsteady foundation. The house may stand firmly at first, but as it is challenged by complex weather systems and time, certain functions will start to be compromised and eventually the house may crumble.

The basic hierarchy of processing is illustrated below for all systems (auditory, sensory and visual). For Auditory and Language Processing (and how it may effect reading), the auditory and language systems must develop normally and from the bottom up:



When assessing a child with a possible processing deficit, it is important to verify that a child can first, hear normally (clear auditory input), process what they hear (auditory processing), apply meaning to it (language processing) and then store it to create a meaningful response (executive function). Because deficits with a foundational skill can negatively impact the more complex skills, if you assess out of order, you may end up with confusing results.

For more information on Auditory Processing assessment and treatment, please call (770) 744-2451 or email drreeves@littlelistenersclinic.com.