



The Curious Case of Hearing Care in Care Homes

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Hard of Hearing Persons In a Home for the Aged

At Drexel Home we think in terms of the total personality of our residents. In fact, our whole program is geared to meet individual needs of the *whole person*. We welcomed, therefore, the opportunity to place emphasis on hearing difficulties among our residents when, in 1953, the *Chicago Hearing Society*, with the cooperation of the *Chicago Women's Aid*, conducted a survey at Drexel Home.

Reaction to hearing loss and to recommended hearing aids is not the same for all our residents. They react to the hearing problem much the same as they have been characteristically meeting other problems all their lives.

It is easy to understand how difficult it was for one of our men residents, *Mr. L.*, to accept the fact that he had defective hearing. For auditory loss, especially in the aged, can be an insidious thing.

Impaired response to auditory stimuli is a gradual process. Often, the older person himself cannot be sure whether he is experiencing true hearing loss or lapses in his listening and concentration—he becomes confused. There is no outward sign of being hard of hearing. There is neither the crutch, an empty place where formerly a limb had been, nor dark glasses and seeing eye dog at one side.

In a Home for the Aged

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tional capacity. The resident will be informed as to the use and limitations of his aid. He will be helped to discriminate between various sounds which come through amplification. He will be assisted in adjusting to the hearing aid. . . . The dividends realized in the progress made by the hard of hearing residents of the home, who accepted the services to help them with their problems, are most satisfying.

Drexel Home's program, at present, is indeed a modest one. However, as our community facilities and services are developed, I am certain that the older folks will receive the help they need.

Ben Grossman
Executive Director
Drexel Home, Chicago
Hearing News, September, 1955.

F.FWD

2022



Scottish Care Home Census 'Hearing impairment' Statistics 2011-2021

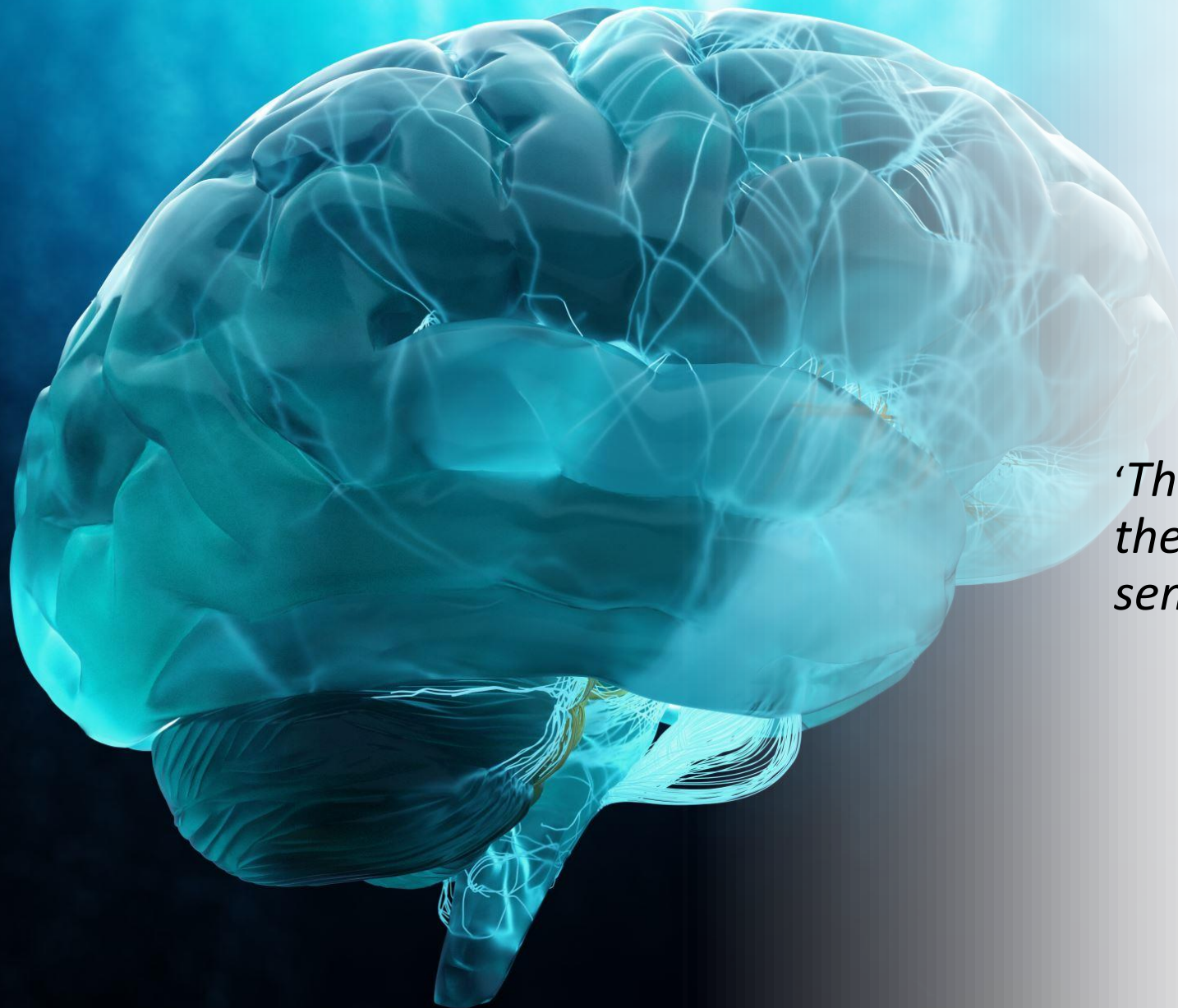
Year	Percentage	Number
2011	12%	3903
2012	11%	3566
2013	11%	3528
2014	11%	3375
2015	10%	3053
2016	10%	3108
2017	9%	2889
2018	9%	2815
2019	9%	2871
2020	n/a	n/a
2021	8%	2310



Prevalence of Hearing Loss in Care Homes for Older People

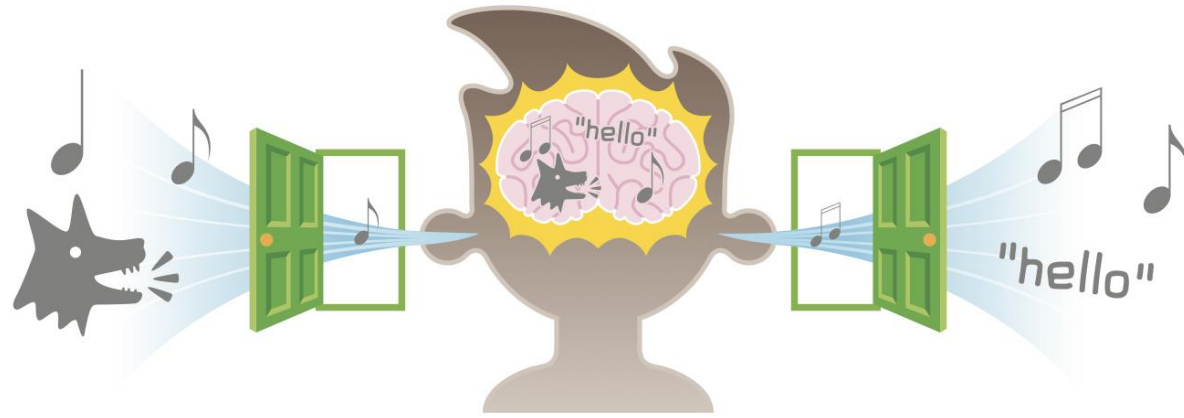


90%

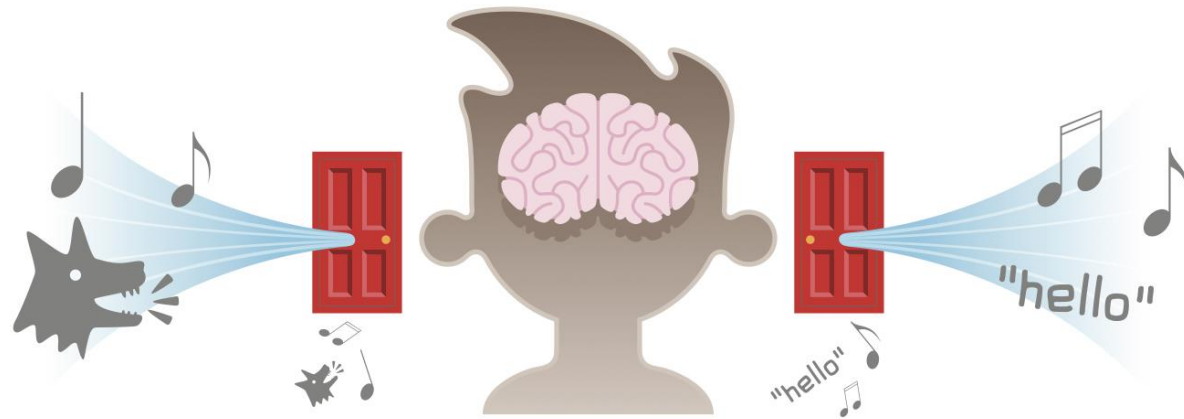


'The way your brain perceives the world is informed by your senses.'

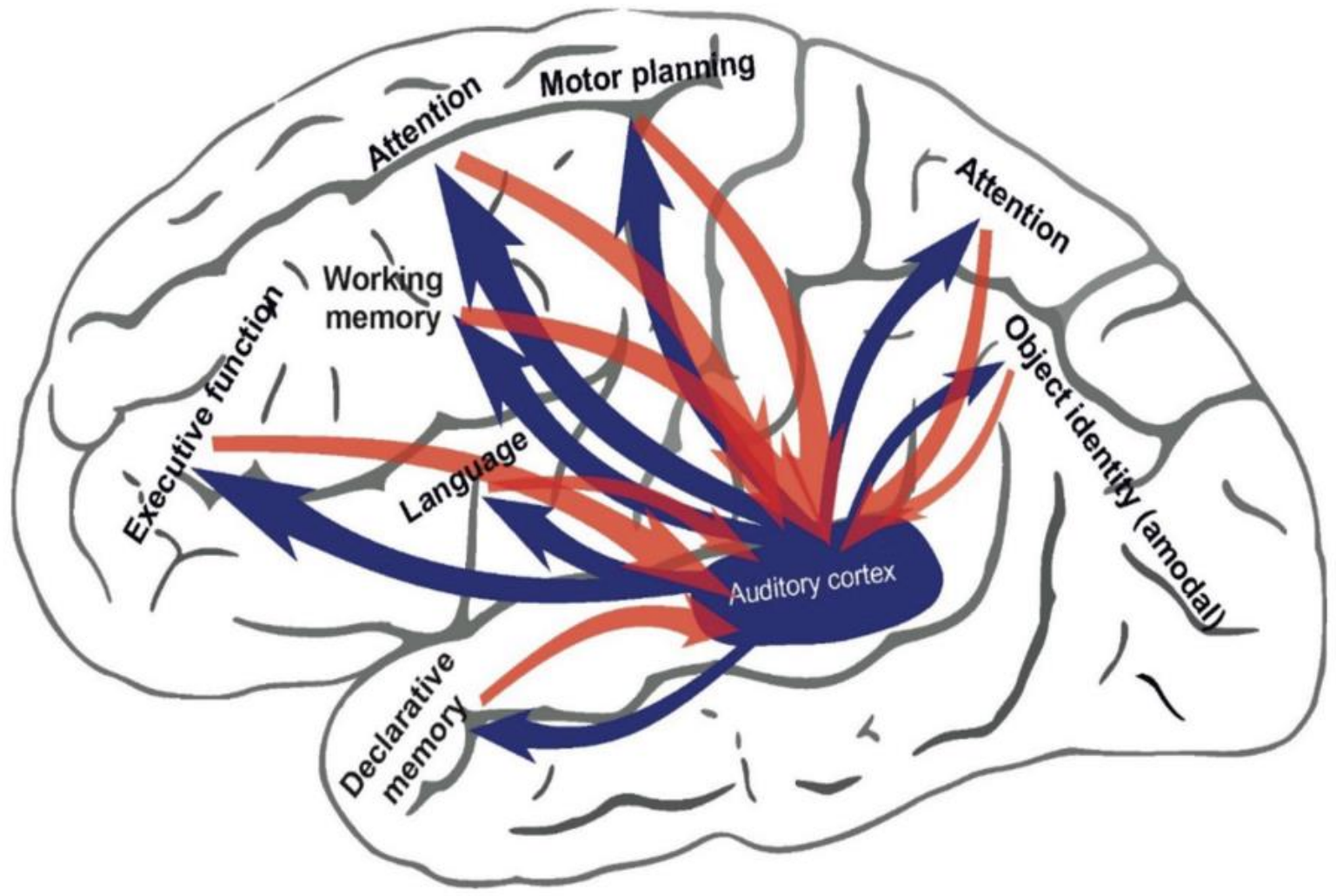
(Eagleman, 2021)



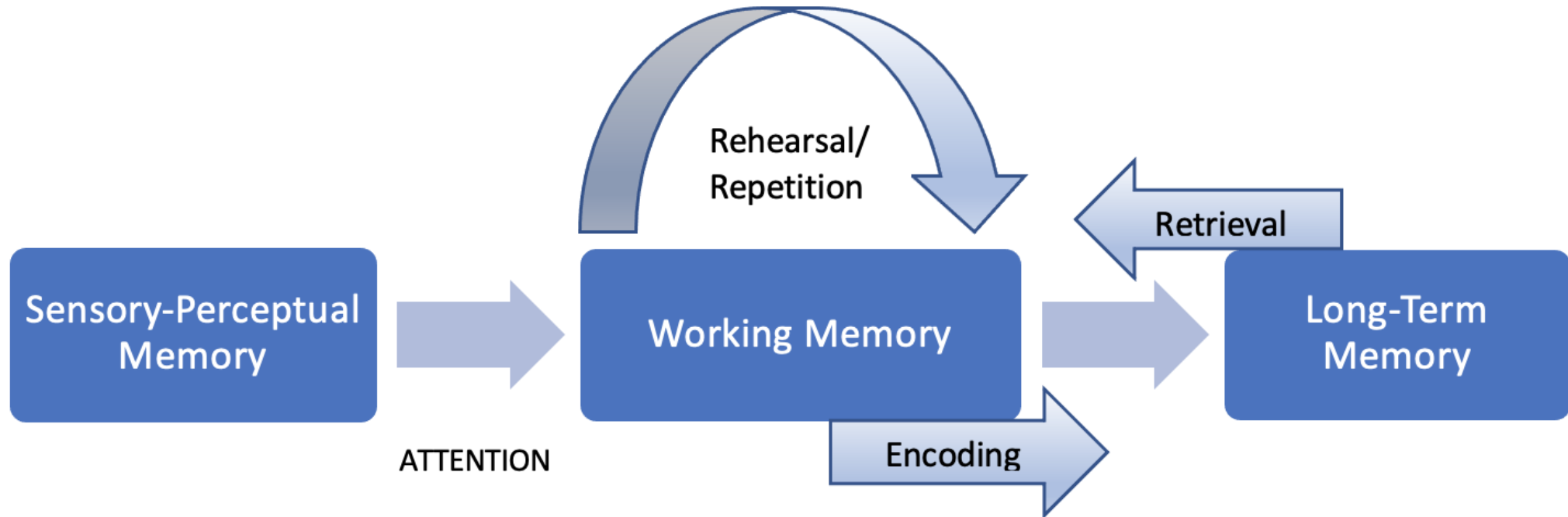
The doorway can be obstructed a little or a lot, which means that sound information/knowledge is not reaching the brain clearly.



(Evelina London, 2022)



Cognitive Information-Processing Model



Hearing Loss or Dementia: How Do We Know?

'My Grandma learned some really good social prompts, people would speak to her and she would smile and go, 'yeah'. People would think she understood what they were saying...when she didn't understand and she did something completely different, they started thinking she was going down the dementia route. And actually it wasn't the fact that she had dementia... ..It was just the fact that they thought she had understood what they were saying and she didn't have a clue. She was just really good at social prompts and going, 'yeah' cause she'd refined it to a fine art.'

(Research participant)



No handicap on self-assessment compared with degree of hearing loss

No Handicap	Degree of Hearing Loss
R3	Right ear: moderate high frequency hearing loss. Left ear: mild to moderate hearing loss. (Registered blind)
R6	Bilateral moderate to severe loss.
R9	Bilateral moderate hearing loss.
R11	Right ear: mild to moderate hearing loss. Left ear: moderate to severe loss.
R12	Bilateral mild to moderate high frequency hearing loss.

Care teams are curious about hearing aids

'Do hearing aids get sent to a person?...like so is it like glasses, they're fitted to...Aye I always wondered that, if it was just like a generic thing or if everybody got them'

'But is there volumes on hearing aids?'

'I know they should be cleaned, whose job is it to clean them?'

'Where [resident's name] will say it's because I've got 2, does that make a difference?'

'Because they new ones, they with the wee thin wire, you're supposed to put a wire through them to unblock them?'

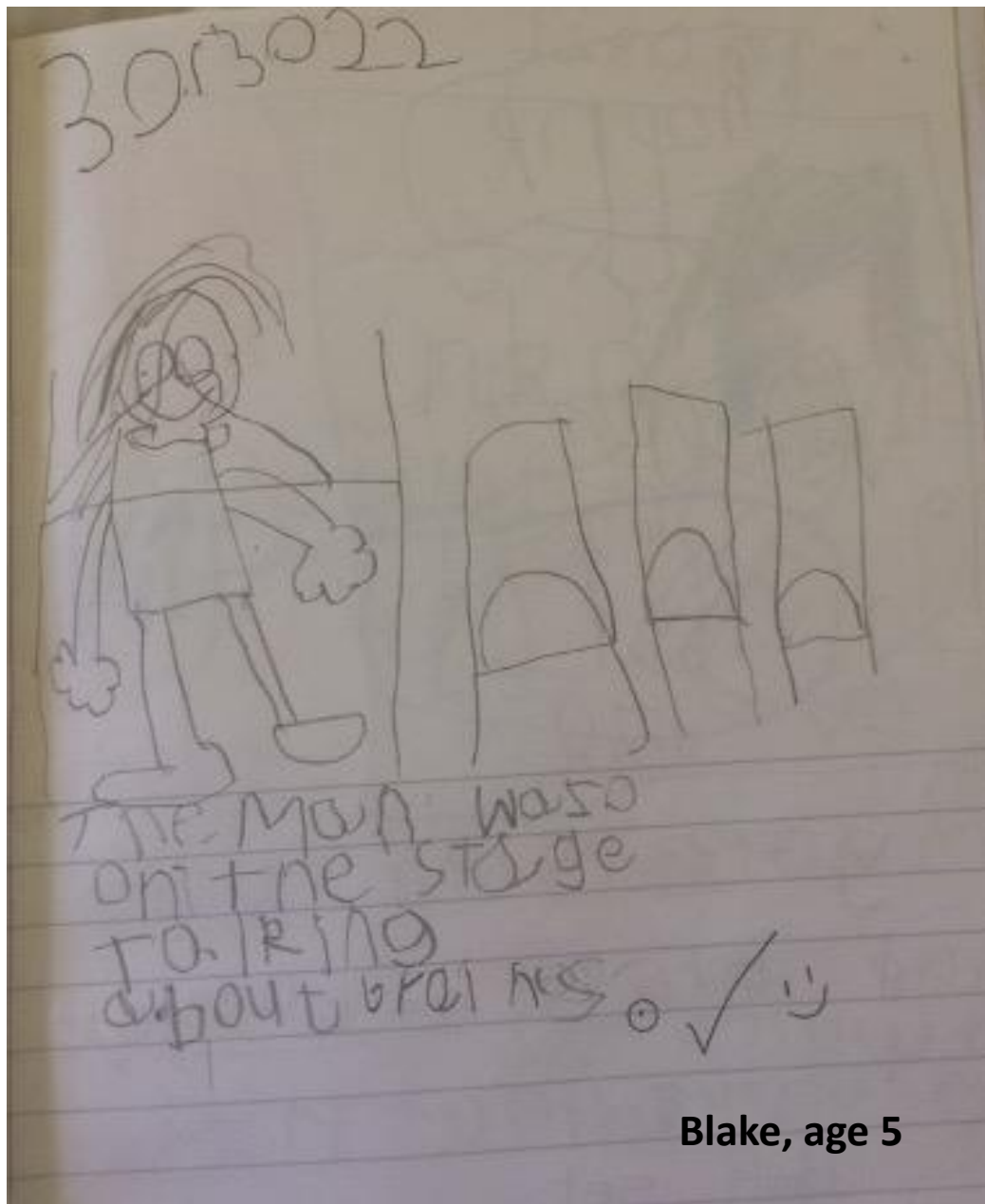
'I don't think anybody's hearing aids will get, I don't mean that bad, I just don't think anybody's will get like cleaned'

And how often should they be cleaned?'

*[About whistling hearing aids]
'Does that not mean they need to be pushed in, like put in better?'*



Assistive devices



Blake, age 5

'Like a tree that needs nutrient-rich soil to arborize, a brain requires the rich soil of social and sensory interaction'

Eagleman (2020)

What can we do to bring about change now?

- Remember – hearing loss is the biggest **modifiable** risk factor for cognitive decline!
- Goal: make listening easier for the brain
- Has the person ever had a hearing assessment?
- Have they had their ears checked for wax?
- Have any hearing aids been professionally serviced in the past 6-9 months?
- Would a personal amplifier help? Would a soundfield system help?
- **Above all: Stay curious about sensory brain health.**



Questions?

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