1. Only purchase an FM system after APD diagnosis and only if recommended by the audiologist who has diagnosed your child. Always trial an FM system first – they don’t suit or help all children. Make sure your child will use it before you buy. Maybe your school, LA or sensory team can borrow one.

2. Make sure your child has an FM system with 2 earpieces so as not to worsen dichotic listening or processing. The brain needs sound of equal volume in both ears simultaneously in order for effective hearing and processing to take place. Also using one earpiece won’t effectively block all background noise – one of its aims. Don’t take the risk of causing further damage, which can occur.

3. The use of an FM system should be used with the full support of the school, and used and maintained correctly - without their full support it is useless. Teachers need to also remind the child to use it at every applicable lesson.

4. Ask your school/local authority to fund before looking elsewhere. There are charities that provide funding if you have evidence of an audiologist’s recommendation – e.g. the NewLife Foundation.

5. Always use the best quality headphones. Good quality ear buds can be more discreet for self-conscious children, and bright colourful headsets can encourage use by younger children.

6. Make sure your child develops coping strategies and doesn’t become too reliant on the FM system, it is just a tool not a therapy or a cure - some children are worse than before they had one when not using it. Limit use to the classroom to avoid that. APD is for life and there are situations where an FM system is not applicable. Children and young people who rely on an FM system have been shown to avoid any social interaction in situations where they cannot use the FM system because they know they will not be able to cope; reliance on the FM system means that they do not have the coping strategies in place - e.g. at other people's homes, swimming, certain sports, parties, dating, etc. As they get older they may be increasingly embarrassed by using one and find themselves unable to interact without it because they have not developed coping strategies to cope with background noise or speech location. Children will become adults, in the real world where an FM system has no place. FM systems don't actually help with processing, just with clarity and amplification of speech, and reduction of background noise. The same applies to hearing aids.

7. If a school buys the FM system, you may not be able to take it home or on to the next school that the child goes to. It is best to have one that is yours, that can go with your child to the next stage.

8. An FM system may be the only accommodation that an audiologist suggests, simply because they know nothing about living with APD - they are medical professionals/researchers and their area is diagnosis; by their own admission, they know nothing of the education or real life needs of a child with APD. Also they have no concept of how most parents might struggle to afford it, or how hard it is to secure funding. If it helps, it can make quite a difference – but it is not guaranteed.

9. Schools/LAs might think that the provision of an FM system is all they need to do for a child with APD, and feel they have fulfilled their obligation by just providing or using the FM system. This is wrong. They still need to provide whatever combination of accommodations that each child with APD needs according to how they are uniquely affected by APD, plus all their other conditions/difficulties - and they cost very little compared to an FM system.

10. Each child with APD needs individually tailored accommodations and support. But they will ALL need pre-teaching - new vocabulary and all class notes given to them at least a day before so that they can familiarise themselves with it. A child with APD should never be copying, taking dictation or making their own notes. I cannot stress that enough; if the notes that the child with APD makes are incorrect or incomplete, which is often the case because of the nature of APD and intermittent processing, that is often all they are left to work from at home, to revise from for tests and exams. Many subjects build on prior knowledge - knowledge with gaps is unreliable and affects new learning. It is setting them up to fail. Failure to make sure that all children have accurate notes will put a child with APD all at a distinct ongoing disadvantage throughout education. This has to stop.

11. Education is not about learning how to take dictation, copy things down or make notes. It is understanding the information taught and being able to learn, remember, recall and reproduce it appropriately when questioned. With accurate pre-provided notes, an FM system can be effective in help a child with APD to just follow a lesson that they are prepared for, with less added stress affecting processing, and actually learn instead of playing catch-up all the time. Everyone benefits.