

## Strategies to Develop Memory Skills at Home

Some children may have difficulties retaining the information that they hear. This can have a significant impact on their learning and progress in the classroom. Children with language difficulties can also have difficulties with memory.

The following strategies can be used at home to help your child develop their memory skills:

- Make sure your child is cued in and listening before giving them an instruction. You can call their name and make sure they're looking at you before asking them to do something. Reduce background noise and distractions where possible. Some children find it difficult to listen in busy, noisy environments.
- Repeat information and revisit things regularly to ensure that your child has remembered what they have learnt. When repeating information, it may help to slow down your language to allow your child more time to process the information.
- Encourage your child to be the teacher and explain what they have learnt to somebody else. This helps them to recall key information and make sense of it.
- Make learning active where possible e.g. by acting things out, drawing pictures, doing experiments etc. Many children learn and remember things better by physically doing an activity.
- Make new information meaningful to the child where possible, by linking it to their interests and personal experiences. This often helps children to retain information more successfully as it is more relevant to them.
- Older children may benefit from the introduction of memory strategies to help them remember new information. Some children will need to be taught these strategies and practice using them when following instructions and learning new things.
  - o Verbal rehearsal: Ask your child to repeat the information back to themselves (out loud, silently or under their breath).



- Jotting down key words: Ask your child to write down the important words from a paragraph of spoken information to help them remember the overall message.
  - Visualising: Ask your child to picture what they have to do whilst listening to spoken information. If they imagine what they need to do, this uses their visual memory instead of their auditory memory.
  - Chunking: Ask your child to break down instructions into small, manageable pieces e.g. when remembering a phone number, numbers are often chunked into groups of numbers.
  - Physical strategies: Ask your child to try out strategies to break down information into smaller pieces of information e.g. counting information on their fingers or using counters to represent each piece of information.
- Practice using the above strategies and developing memory skills by playing the following games at home:
- I went shopping: Start the game with 'I went shopping and I bought...' and take turns to add an item to the list. On each turn, your child must remember everything on the list so far before adding another item.
  - Simon Says: Give instructions where your child needs to remember more than one action e.g. 'touch your toes, knees and mouth'.
  - Shopping: Place lots of objects out on the table and ask your child to fetch a number of items for you to buy from the shop e.g. 'can I have a banana, two apples and some milk?'
  - Dressing up: Have a pile of clothes/clothing pictures in front of you, and ask your child to dress themselves/a character using a list of clothes e.g. 'put on a red t-shirt, blue trousers and brown shoes'. Encourage the child to find all the clothes they need before putting them on so that they don't forget them!
  - Drawing pictures: Give simple instructions for your child to follow to draw a picture. If they are following these easily, you can give two instructions at a time e.g. 'add three windows and a blue door'.
  - Building a Lego model: Give your child all the Lego pieces and give them instructions to build a model. Make instructions more complex or give more than one instruction at once if your child is finding the task too easy.