

SEND News

Working Memory Special



What is Working Memory?

Working Memory is a cognitive skill that refers to the ability to store and manipulate information (verbal, visual and spatial) in the mind for short periods, such as remembering telephone numbers, following directions etc. Children often are required to hold information in mind whilst engaged in other activities. The capacity to store this information is vital to many learning activities in the classroom. However, information held in working memory can easily be lost through distraction or overload. Children with poor working memory often struggle to meet the heavy demands of many everyday classroom activities, simply because they are unable to hold sufficient information in mind to allow them to complete the task (often forgetting information/instructions, and being forced to guess etc.) For this reason, it is vital we identify and support children who experience these difficulties. The links and information below should help you support your child more effectively.

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Tips for Parents

- ❖ Work on encouraging your child to visualise – **encourage your child to visualise what they have just heard**
- ❖ Chunk information into smaller pieces this includes instructions and tasks
- ❖ Make it multisensory
- ❖ Make it visual
- ❖ Try games that use visual memory
- ❖ Play cards
- ❖ Encourage active reading
- ❖ Have your child teach you. **Being able to explain how to do something involves making sense of information and mentally filing it**
- ❖ Help make connections
This helps your child make links and makes things more memorable
- ❖ Ask questions
- ❖ Use checklists and diaries



Top inclusive strategies to support working memory:

- Building mind maps
- Visualize everything
- Play memory games
- Remove the stress from learning
- Know the child's learning style
- Let your children teach you
- Encourage reading including annotating, highlighting of text
- Break information into smaller chunks
- Talk about favourite memories



A few links for ideas for supporting working memory difficulties:

- How does the working memory work?
<https://www.scotthyong.com/blog/2019/04/24/working-memory/>
- 8 ways to improve your child's working memory
<https://www.magiccrate.in/blog/parenting-tips/8-ways-to-improve-your-childs-working-memory-must-try/>
<https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/learning-at-home/homework-study-skills/8-working-memory-boosters>
- Working memory games
<https://childhood101.com/short-term-memory-games/>