

## What activities can improve working memory capacity?

- Teach visualisation: Support your child to make a picture in their head of what they have just read or heard. Ask them to mentally picture what they need to do for a specific task (e.g. get everything ready to make a cake) and then get them to draw that picture. As they get better at visualising then just get them to describe what they can see in their head without having to draw it.
- Play games that use visual memory: Matching games are great for visual memory (e.g. Memory, Snap, Pairs, Bingo). You might also make up games that require visual memory (i.e. in the car recite letters and numbers on licence plates then say them backwards).
- Get your child to teach you: Encourage them to explain how to do a new skill they are learning and teach you how to do it. By working on their explanation it will support them to make sense of what they have learned and file it away in their memory.
- Play card games: This can support working memory through both remembering the rules of the game and remembering which cards they have in their hand and which ones have been played already (e.g. Go Fish, Uno, Crazy 8's).
- Support your child to do active reading: Teach them to use highlighters, sticky notes, take notes, underline text to help them keep the information they have read active for long enough to respond to questions about it. Asking questions about what they are reading and talking out loud can also help them to actively read and develop good strategies for all reading.
- Give information in a multi-sensory way: If they are presented with opportunities to process the information in many different ways it will help with their working memory and transferring new information into long term memory.
  - Write tasks down
  - Say it aloud
  - Throw a ball back and forth whilst discussing what to do
  - Draw the task
  - Use pictures to support verbal information
  - Demonstrate the task
- Make connections: Use mnemonics (e.g. 'Roy G Biv' for the colours of the rainbow) to help connect information and from new and old memories.
- Games that involve repeating sequences of information, forwards and backwards: Using colours, shapes, food items, days of the week, clothes, animals, numbers, friends' names.
- Word list games: such as "I went to the shop/zoo/beach and I saw....".

- The game ‘Guess Who?’: The child has to eliminate characters by asking questions about what their character looks like using memory of the facial features.
- “Simon Says” and other instructional games: Give the child more than one instruction at a time and see if they can remember them all (e.g. “sit down, put your hands on your head then blink three times” or ‘Obstacle Courses’ where your child needs to complete an obstacle course to reach a ‘goodie’ by remembering the instructions to get there (e.g. ‘Go under the table, behind the chair, and through the tunnel’)
- Threading beads/building a block tower: Sit in a circle with a group/or face to face and each person takes a turn to say two colours that you both need to thread/build. Take in turns to tell each other two colours and slowly increase the number of colours to get to thread/build onto their tower.
- “Get the Loot”: Put pirate hats on and pretend to be pirates, set up two pirate ships with pictures of items for the ‘loot’ and explain that each child needs to get 2 things from the other pirate ship to bring back. Get the child to say the things they need to get 3 times before they go and get it. Increase the number of items to get.
- “Picnic time”: Give your child the name of 2-3 things that they need to collect to bring to a picnic. Have them collect the items and bring them to a picnic rug (you can use pictures of items or the real item).