

## Listening and Remembering Skills in Under 7's.



Some children find it hard to listen and remember what is said to them.

Things you might see:

- Your child doesn't seem to listen
- They struggle to remember task instructions so sit and wait for a prompt to start
- They are slow to finish things
- They need you to repeat things several times and do better when you have shown them.
- Can be quite passive in group activities, watching from the side-lines rather than joining in.

Normal Memory Development for children

Age (in years)	Number of digits(numbers) they can hold in their short term memory
5.5	4
6	5
8.5	6
11-12	6-7

Auditory memory is the ability to remember words and sounds

The suggested sentence lengths that young children can remember are outlined below

Age (years)	Sentence length (words)
3-4	4 or 5
4-5	6 or 7
5-6	8 or 9

(Tan 2000).

**Factors that can affect your child's ability to remember things include:**

- Hearing skills, check they can hear ok.
- Attention –if they are not paying attention or distractible
- Their knowledge and interest in a topic/activity
- Motivation
- if they are feeling unwell or tired.
- If your child is upset or worried about something they are less able to concentrate.
- Length and complexity of information given
- Speed of delivery-pace of an activity may be too fast.

## Top tips

Make sure your child is looking and listening to you, before you give an instruction or information. Use their name before giving an instruction



Let the child know when you are about to give an instruction, either verbally or use a signal, listening cues, e.g. a bell in class, or signal to your ear and say 'good listening'.

Use simple language. Allow your child time to respond.



Simplify the instruction by shortening it rather than rewording it. Break instructions down into short chunks.



Note down key points using pictures or words in an easily visible place.

Support instructions using gesture and facial expressions.

Visual clues can help children to remember, e.g. drawing a visual planner or giving them a job card



Repetition-Encourage your child to repeat an instruction aloud and then follow the instruction you gave.

Reassure them that it's ok to forget things-we all do sometimes.



## **Auditory Memory Games and Activities**

### **Simon Says**

Play Simon says... e.g. Simon says touch your nose and ears. Add extra actions, e.g. clap your hands then jump to the chair. Encourage them to do the actions in the correct sequence.

### **Shopping game**

Get a range of 6 everyday objects – a spoon, a teddy, a bowl, a toy car etc, .Ask your child to collect certain objects as they ‘shop’. Start at an easy level, say 2 items and as they find this easier move on to 3 then 4. “Can you buy me a spoon and a teddy please” Gradually increase to 4 items to remember.

Try asking your child for objects from around the house, e.g. ask for a toothbrush (so they have to go to the bathroom) .They have to move around the house and remember what they have been asked for.

At the supermarket: Start with 2-3 items to remember as you shop at a supermarket. Then build up. Encourage your child to visualise the items as you are saying them.

### **Recall of a spoken sequence**

List items and see if the child can remember them. Start at an easy level, for example 2 items and then gradually increase. You could try: Numbers; 5, 1, 6, 9.

Colours; red, blue, yellow, green      Animals; cat, dog, fox, sheep etc

### **Chaining games**

These are games where you build up amount of information a child has to remember

e.g. “I went to the market and I bought a .....” ?

Take turns to add a piece of information to a list and each turn you have to recall the list in full. To keep it interesting you can think of items in different categories:-

I went to space and I saw.....

I went to the zoo and I saw.....

Make it harder by adding a description e.g.” I went to the zoo and saw a tiger with stripes.”



### **Orienteering/ treasure hunt activities**

Try giving the child instructions to find a hidden object. This could be made very motivating if you hide a treat or favourite toy. First give instructions one at a time, but as they improve you could give 2 or 3 instructions together. e.g. “go to the kitchen door, take 4 Steps into the kitchen and look under the bowl”.

### **Remembering parts of a story**

When reading with the child, before you turn the page over ask specific questions about the page you have just read. What was the boy’s name? Where did they travel to? What did they forget? This helps the child learn how to focus on key pieces of information.

### **Taking messages**

Ask your child to take a message to an adult or another child. For example “Tell your brother tea is ready and bring his washing down” ,“Tell dad there is a letter for him on the table” You can let the other person know the message so they can help the child remember if they have difficulty.

### **Drawing to instruction**

Draw an outline and tell your child to put on specific details. e.g. draw a square for house and ask the child to put on a green door on the left, then maybe 2 small windows at the top..... Increase or decrease the length of the instruction for the child.

### **Barrier Games-You need 2 people for these**

Model making – give each person identical model making material. Start simple, arranging 3 coloured bricks, step up to building a model out of lego. Use a big book or piece of card as your barrier, make sure the listener can’t see the model.

Packed lunch game –each person has a lunch box and a set of toy food each. Take turns being mum and tell each other what to put in their lunch boxes. Then check that they have the same items in each box.

Mr Potato Head-You will need 2 identical sets, child/adult makes a face and then has to tell the other person how to do it without showing them the final product. The other person has to listen and remember instructions on what to do to complete the task.



Colouring in a picture scene

**Remember to start at an easy level and gradually make it harder. Find strategies that help the child and encourage them to use them in the games.**