

Strategies for Improving Working Memory

For children with ADHD, working memory is impaired. Working memory is essential for individuals to function in social or academic settings. Parents must provide substantial supports to allow a child to fully engage in a variety of settings. The supports also help children internalize strategies to compensate for working memory deficits.

1. ***Incorporate Multiple Senses in Instructions***

- Visual information – provide a picture chart for daily and weekly tasks
- Auditory information – provide clear concise directions (keep it to 2 or 3 words!), put a musical beat to the instructions
- Tactile information – have your child tap a task after each task is completed

2. ***Teach Visualizations***

- Teach your child to use future visualizations to help with planning for the day
 - “Let’s think about your day. Close your eyes and tell me what you need to do today.” Prompt your child to think about steps from the start of the day (getting dressed, having breakfast, packing the backpack...etc.”

3. ***Teach Repeating Directions***

- Repeating instructions several times after they are given can help move information from short-term to long-term memory.
 - “Remember my soccer bag, cleats, and water bottle. Remember my soccer bag, cleats, and water bottle...etc.”

4. ***Teach How to Frame a Task***

- Repeating directions out loud at the start of the task and at the end of the task (as well as anytime there is a break in the task) will help ingrain the directions.

5. ***Teach and Practice Writing (or drawing) tasks***

- Have your child write steps for tasks for other activities. Modeling to your child how to prepare to execute a task will teach them the skill.
 - “We need to get three things from the grocery store, can you write these down? Milk, bread, and butter.”

6. ***Use Mnemonic Devices***

- Teach your child how to create a phrase or word that has the first letter of each word represent an item on a list.
 - What to do with someone is bothering you: Use your WITS: **W**alk away, **I**gnore, **T**alk it **O**ut, **S**eek out help.
 - Remember the ABC’s of chores: Throw **A**way trash, make your **B**ed, and put away your **C**lothes.