

Strategies to support a child with working memory difficulties

Chunk instructions into short sections, so that the child has less to remember in one go and cut out superfluous language

For complex instructions, try to present them in the order that you want them done

e.g. Instead of "Before you start, collect a pencil and your book." You could say "Collect a pencil and your book, then sit down and start."

Help the child to develop strategies for remembering instructions

Identify key words - e.g. highlight, colour code

Repeat key words

Link each word with a finger using non dominant hand

Think of a picture to go with the words or jot down key words to remember during a session and cross off as completed

Help a child to be aware of how much they remember, so that they know to ask for repetitions if necessary rather than guessing - "Have you got it?" "Do you know what to do?"

Make eye contact and stay still when giving instructions, ask the child to repeat back the instructions, wait a little longer than you think necessary to give the child time to analyse what is being said.

Be aware of auditory distractions e.g. playground noises, pencils dropping, chairs scraping etc

For longer tasks, provide a checklist of subtasks for the child to tick off as completed, so that the child can see their progress through a task.

Have all resources ready on the table.

Avoid / limit the amount of copying from the board.

Praise and compliment - "Well done, you remembered to..." "That's fantastic - you checked with your partner."