



Special Needs Tip: Things to try at home based on strategies we use in school to help support your child's learning. We hope that these ideas might be helpful, but there is no obligation or expectation for you to use them.

Ideas to support memory

Many children struggle with memory difficulties, Unfortunately, there is no magic answer for improving your memory. But there are lots of fun activities that can support the development of memory skills.

Commercial games

There are lots of commercially produced games like Dobble and Uno that support memory skills, but equally there are many that require little or no specialist equipment.

Pairs Games

There are lots of different games that can be played with special or ordinary playing cards where you lay out the cards and then take turns to turn over two cards looking for a pair. At the end of the game the person with the most cards is the winner.

You can support your child's memory skills with this kind of game by talking through your thinking as you search for a matching pair. This models your thinking and helps them to copy it.

There are lots of games of this type online. As always be aware of any online safety implications and that your child is not sharing personal data or accessing paid for features (e.g. special card backs).

List games

There are a lot of different games that can be played in pairs or groups where you try and remember a list of items. For example:

- 'I went to the shop and brought...' Each player names the item they have brought and then tries to remember the things 'brought' in the previous turns. This can be played 'I went to the zoo and saw...' 'In my bedroom, I have...' 'In my bag, I packed...' etc. etc. The context can be changed to suit your child's interests.
- Trying to name something e.g. an animal, children's names, things to eat, etc in a group for every letter of the alphabet. You can work together on this one.
- Categories- where you try and name as many things in a category (e.g. colours, pets, things in the kitchen, words that rhyme with cat, etc) as you can in a set time.
- Story telling- one person begins the story with a sentence and then each person in turn repeats the previous sentences and adds a new one- using actions helps with memory for this one!

The important bit is to support your child by modelling how you remember things by saying what it is you are doing to help remember, for example

- shutting your eyes and pretending you can see the object you are trying to remember (visualising)
- supporting the visualising by describing a detail of the object e.g. a grey elephant, a green apple with a leaf on it
- counting things off on your fingers
- looking at the person who said something as you are trying to remember it
- repeating items as they are said
- using actions

Kim's game

Put a number of random things on a table, look at them for a minute, then cover them with a cloth and take one away. When the items are uncovered again, the idea is to work out the missing item. You can then swap and someone else can remove the item which will give you a chance to model how to remember the missing item.

Alternatively: look at the items and then cover the tray and all the participants write or draw a list of the covered items. The person who gets the most right is the winner.

Start with no more than five items. As your child gets better at the game, you can increase the number of items. Remember to support their memory by describing the items and modelling how you identify it e.g. 'there was something round next to the cup and it is missing, so the missing item must be the ball'.

Picture quizzes

Ask your child or children to look at a picture (from a magazine, book or on the computer) for a minute and then ask them questions about what they could see, e.g.

- What was in the picture?
- What colours could they see?
- How many people were in the picture? Etc, etc.

The coin game

Take a handful of coins and put them in sequence e.g. 5p, 2p, 2p, 20p. Ask your child to look at the coins for a minute, then cover them and ask the child to arrange a second set of coins to match. See how quickly they can do it. As they become more confident, you can increase the number of coins or give them a pile of coins and get them to select the coins they will need to use.

Remember to talk about what you are doing to support your child to develop their memory and see the links between actions and words.

Spot the difference

One team or person leaves the room and the other team/ person changes things in the room (e.g. moving rugs, furniture, toys, etc). The first team return and try to spot the changes.

Hope you have fun!

Ms Alston