

Advice sheet

Auditory Memory

Auditory memory is remembering things you have just heard. It is an important skill as it helps you to retain words long enough in your head for you to be able to work out what they mean. Some children need help in developing a good auditory memory so that they can remember what has been said or what they have been asked to do.

Everyday Strategies

- Give instructions in the order in which they are to be done.
- Limit your sentence length, reducing longer sentences into smaller chunks.
- Pause between sentences to allow the child time to process an instruction they have been given / a question that has been asked. A pause time of approximately 3 seconds is recommended.
- Ask the child what they need to do rather than asking if they have understood. If required remind them how many things they need to do and/or offer choices (e.g. "Do you need to get your pencil case or your toothbrush?")
- Encourage the child to say if they do not understand.
- Rephrase questions that the child has not understood.
- Simplify sentences where needed.

Activities

Easiest:

- **SHOPPING:** Tell the child which things to "buy" from the "shop" on the other side of the room.
- **POSTING:** Tell the child which pictures/objects to put in the "postbox" (a hole in a cardboard box).
- **WASHING:** Tell the child which items of clothing to put in the washing machine/hang on a pretend washing line (a piece of string across the room).
- **TREASURE HUNTS:-** Ask child to collect various items from around room or while on an outing. Encourage him/her to remember several items at once.
- **DRESSING UP:-** Have a pile of clothes and ask the child to put on "a hat and one sock"; or, string up a washing line and ask the child to hang up the long sock and the flannel etc.
- **COOKING:** If possible make real cakes and tarts and name the ingredients the child must fetch.
- **PUZZLE:** Tell him/her which pieces to put back in the puzzle.



Later on, children may need to be taught strategies:

- **SILENT REHEARSAL:** This is when instructions or key words are repeated SILENTLY. For example, if a child is told to "Go to Mr Brown's office and tell him that Tommy is going to the dentist", they would have to silently repeat (in their heads, or mouthing, or to begin with even saying quietly) the important words – Mr Brown, Tommy, dentist.
- **VISUALISING:** When the child is given an instruction, they may be able to IMAGINE themselves doing the task. If they can imagine what has to happen, they won't need to rely on their auditory memory – they can use their visual memory instead.



- **CHUNKING:** This involves **BREAKING DOWN** instructions into smaller, manageable pieces. For example, when we're told a phone number we don't try to remember it as 6 individual numbers, but instead try to remember it as groups of numbers eg. 722294 is seven-double-two and two-nine-four.
- **PHYSICAL STRATEGIES:** This is useful when instructions can be broken down into lists. Children can count the instructions on their fingers, use counters, or push beads on a string (like an abacus) – this means that they have a physical/visual reminder about how many details they have been given.

Children will find some strategies more useful than others, and may even be able to suggest/adapt strategies so that they can be used more successfully.