



Why is Auditory Memory Important?

Auditory memory is the ability to take in, recall and use information which we have heard. It allows children to extend their attention span, and hold information in their minds long enough to act on it. Poor auditory memory skills impact on a child's ability to follow instructions at home and at school, as well as understand conversations in social environments. It is a vital skill in accessing the curriculum at school. We can develop your child's auditory memory skills through communication strategies and activities.

Auditory Memory Difficulties

If a child has difficulties with auditory memory, these difficulties may become more apparent the older they get. Children with auditory memory difficulties may present in the following ways:

- They may be unable to follow long instructions
- Have difficulty remembering new vocabulary words
- Find it hard to sustain attention for a long period of time and staying on task
- Appear 'in their own world'
- Seem shy
- Find it hard telling you about their day or telling you a story
- Are slow to retrieve information
- May make slower progress in school
- Be frustrated

It is difficult to improve memory capacity in both children and adults, however modifying the environment and teaching strategies **can** help.

For children with poor auditory memory it is much like a bucket being filled with water (sounds, spoken words), but the bucket has holes in the bottom, and a lot of this water (information) is being lost. Structuring the environment and teaching strategies can tape up some of these holes, meaning that less information is lost.

By adapting how **we** communicate with children, we can reduce the memory load put on them. This increases their chances of success and builds self-esteem.



Strategies to support Auditory Memory



Minimise any background distractions where possible, e.g. remove the iPad.

Gain your child's attention by using their name before you start speaking.

Keep your talking slow and frequently pause.

Use chunking. When giving a long piece of information or instruction, 'chunk' it into smaller parts.

When giving new information, keep it brief and concise.

When giving instructions, **think about the order**. Say them in the order that you want them to be carried out in. Use language like 'first, then, lastly'.

Show, say and write your instructions. Using more than one method of communication will help your child remember what has been said.

Allow time for your child to process your instructions/questions before asking another question. Count to a number between 5 and 10 and try not to interrupt their thinking.

Repeat, don't rephrase. If you need to say something again, repeat it exactly how you said it the first time. If you rephrase it, or even add a word, your child will process a whole new sentence. If they still are struggling after this, then it is likely they are experiencing a difficulty in comprehension so rephrasing is okay to use here.

Encourage your child to seek clarification or ask for an instruction to be repeated. Allow extra time for your child to retrieve the information and form a response.

Use **visual reminders** when completing a task, e.g. a [task planner](#) to break down each step of an activity.

For some children with auditory memory difficulties, they can be left feeling frustrated or embarrassed. Reward their efforts to build self-esteem. You can use a [reward chart](#) to reinforce this

