

Classroom Strategies to Help a Child with Language and/or Memory Difficulties

Location:

- ⇒ Ensure the child is looking at you before you speak to them. If necessary call the child's name to gain their attention.
- ⇒ Make sure the child sits where they can see your face at all times without having to turn their head.
- ⇒ Children who have or may have dyslexia (left hemisphere difficulty) may benefit from having information enter via their right ear as this is the most direct route into the language centre based in the left hemisphere. Therefore placement within the classroom is important.



Your Instructions:

- ⇒ Ensure instructions are simple and short. Where this is not possible leave a short pause of 3 seconds between each part of the instruction.
- ⇒ Give the child adequate time to organise their thoughts and process information when responding to questions.
- ⇒ Repeat instructions, seeking confirmation discreetly, that the child has heard/understood wherever possible.
- ⇒ Encourage the child to ask for repetition when needed (support will be needed to build up confidence to do this).
- ⇒ Use visual aids or give a demonstration to support instructions e.g. appropriate pictures or write down instructions.
- ⇒ Provide a simple outline of the lesson using key words before you start. Pictures or written key words can be given to help the child.
- ⇒ At the end of the lesson, summarise and review all key words.
- ⇒ Encourage the child to rehearse/repeat the instruction until the task has been completed i.e. in their mind or verbalise quietly.
- ⇒ Encourage the child to visualise the action or object or instruction.



More useful strategies:

- Sit the child with peers who are less likely to distract or interfere with his/her ability to process information.
- Arrange a classroom or homework 'buddy' to offer support e.g. to share notes or verify homework tasks.
- Minimise background noise e.g. heaters, computers, outside traffic, classroom noise.
- Children with language difficulties have to listen intently in order to process information. Consequently they tire easily when lessons follow each. Allow them to take a brief break or 'time out', e.g. allow the child stop working for a few minutes.