



Occupational Therapy Department

## Memory

Information for parents and carers

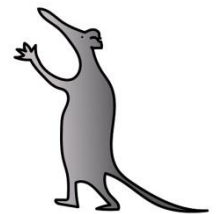
### What is memory?

Memory is the ability to store, retain and recall information. It requires several areas of the brain to work together to recall past experiences. There are two types of memory; short term memory and long term memory.

Memories can be distinguished as;

Retrospective – remembering things in the past

Prospective – remembering things that are going to happen in the future.



### Why children may have some difficulties

After a brain injury the child's memory may not work as well as it used to. Memory problems can affect all areas of a child's life including, daily routines, school, and hobbies.

### Strategies to help

**External memory strategies:** these are tools which can help compensate for memory impairment:

- A daily planner to help the child remember what they need to do that day. This can include general information or specific routines.
- A note pad to allow the child to write down anything they need to remember.
- Children now use laptops, smart phones and tablets every day. These can be utilised to aid their memory, through the use of alarms and notes. There are even specific apps that may be beneficial to prompt medications and help them manage symptoms.
- It may be useful to have a white board, as this can be used as a large daily planner, or to allow family members to write notes to remind them.
- Children may find lists / checklists beneficial as a visual prompt and this will provide a sense of achievement as they mark off when they have done an activity.
- If the child is becoming more independent with their medication, a dosset box or medication blister pack may be beneficial to help them manage this.

**Environmental memory strategies:** these involve modifying the environment or the way the child interacts with the environment. Environmental memory strategies can be used in conjunction with external memory strategies to help remind the child to use them:

- Having a routine – this will help with memory, as tasks become habit after some time.
- Everything having a place – this will reduce the need to go and look for items or them becoming misplaced.

- Keeping things in sight – by placing external memory strategies or items in certain places they become a visual cue to complete a task. For example, placing a book on the table will remind them to do their homework.
- Having a central point for organisation – create a place that all important information goes. This could be a pin board, a white board or a file on the fridge door. The child then knows where to look if they need to know something.
- Avoid clutter - an untidy or cluttered environment may cause things to be lost more easily.

**Internal memory strategies** – these are strategies the child can do in their mind to help them remember things.

- Repetition – repeating what they need to remember, either out loud or in their head will help it stick in their memory.
- Chunking - this is breaking information in to chunks, so remembering a number as 0151-252-5660. Splitting it in to chunks makes it easier to remember.
- Categorising - putting information into categories, for example if they need to remember apples, socks and bananas – they would categorise this as Fruit - apples and bananas and Clothes - socks.
- Association - this involves linking what they want to learn with something they already know. It's the process of forming a link between visual information and verbal information. For example remembering someone's name – if they know someone else with that name, they can picture that person and will make an association, helping them to remember the new person's name.

## Contact us

If you need further information, speak to your occupational therapist or contact the team – 0151 252 5660

This leaflet only gives general information. You must always discuss the individual treatment of your child with the appropriate member of staff. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about your child's treatment. This information can be made available in other languages and formats if requested.

Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust  
Alder Hey  
Eaton Road  
Liverpool  
L12 2AP

Tel: 0151 228 4811  
[www.alderhey.nhs.uk](http://www.alderhey.nhs.uk)

