

Disclaimer: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies or choking. Children must always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.

Why memory and recall matters

As children's ability to concentrate and maintain attention develops they will be better able to retain and recall information, or in other words, commit information to memory.

Short-term memory, also referred to as working memory, is needed for functioning from moment to moment during everyday life. It holds new information whilst the brain can make sense of it and connect it with other previously stored information. Children make connections with previous experience in their play, laying down new memories and reinforcing neural pathways.



Long-term memory is a permanent store that is drawn upon for information about past experiences and events, as well as everyday general knowledge, facts and skills.

Memory recall involves the ability to remember something that isn't actually present. The early stage of memory recall starts with babies as they develop object permanence although it becomes much more reliable as children grow older and the amount they can recall increases.

Here are some top tips to help children with their memory and recall skills.

- Provide practical hands-on experiences which help children build neural pathways, creating memories that inform future learning
- Allow plenty of opportunity for children to repeat experiences that are meaningful to them, as repetition significantly increases memory performance
- If children are disinterested or stressed, their memory will not function properly, and this will impact upon the amount of information that they are able to retain and recall. Ensure children are happy, relaxed and engaged in their play by meeting their emotional needs and providing experiences which grab their attention
- Engage children in active learning such as singing, physical activity and movement which increase the likelihood of remembering through muscle memory (the ability to reproduce particle movements without conscious thought)
- Repeat nursery rhymes and familiar stories to help build expectation and reinforce memory through playful repetition
- Help children to visualise by 'making pictures in their mind' when listening to stories or talking about events
- Use visual timetables to prompt children to remember 'what comes next?'

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- Play memory games which are matched to children's developmental level. For example, placing a number of items on a tray and covering these up then asking children to recall the items
- Organise resources so that there is a place for everything and make tidy-up time a fun challenge to remember where everything goes
- Prompt children to recall experiences with genuine interest and curiosity (See this week's MyNDNA activity)
- Share with children your own strategies for remembering things. Show them how you make lists, memorise information and 'think aloud' as you go
- Allow yourself to 'forget' things and encourage the children to remember for you.

NDNA products to support you

- Online course: [Characteristics of Effective Learning](#)

Find more resources at www.ndna.org.uk/hub/myndna