



WORKING MEMORY CHECK LIST- what do I look out for in the classroom?

Name:

DOB:

Date:

Behaviour	Observed in child yes/no
A child who is making poor academic progress, particularly in maths, reading and writing	
A child who is reserved in groups and rarely volunteers answers	
A child who has difficulties in following instructions and remembering messages	
A child who tends to lose track in complex tasks and may even eventually abandon	
A child who has problems with activities that combine storage and processing	
A child who has short attention span and is highly distractible	
A child who has place-keeping difficulties	
A child who has poor self-esteem	

CLASSROOM SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN WITH WORKING MEMORY PROBLEMS

WHEN PLANNING AND DELIVERING LESSONS REMEMBER TO.....	ACTION										
Reduce working memory loads by reducing the overall amount of material to be remembered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make new information/concepts meaningful/familiar (teach from the known to the unknown) • Simplify linguistic structures • Break down multi-step tasks into separate steps • Encourage use of memory aids (see below) 										
Look for warning signs and acknowledge working memory difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to the child • Ask what they are doing and what they are to do next 										
Regularly repeat instructions and information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeat general instructions • Repeat task specific instructions 										
Beware of concurrent processing tasks particularly attention in Literacy and Numeracy lessons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid asking the child to carry out extra processing as this may cause overload 										
Develop child's meta-cognition by explicitly teaching strategies (for age 8 and older)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use verbal rehearsal to remember important information • Use memory aids (see below) • Provide an ethos of 'Asking for help is not being weak' • Focus on solutions not problems • Use: <table style="margin-left: 40px; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 40px;">Grouping</td> <td>Chunking</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mnemonics</td> <td>Colour coding</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Visualisation</td> <td>Chaining</td> </tr> </table> 	Grouping	Chunking	Mnemonics	Colour coding	Visualisation	Chaining				
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Encourage use of memory aids. Be aware that pupils may initially have difficulty so need to be taught how to master the aids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use: <table style="margin-left: 40px; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 40px;">Number lines</td> <td>Unifix blocks</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Numicon</td> <td>Dictaphones</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Teacher notes</td> <td>Talking Tins/postcards</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Personalised dictionaries</td> <td>Wall charts</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Task breakdown sheets</td> <td>Mind-mapping</td> </tr> </table> 	Number lines	Unifix blocks	Numicon	Dictaphones	Teacher notes	Talking Tins/postcards	Personalised dictionaries	Wall charts	Task breakdown sheets	Mind-mapping
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When planning evaluate working demands of activities and lessons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the amount of information that a child has to remember and break down into simple steps • Don't ask a child to copy from the board 										
Monitor and observe the child carefully	<p>Look for signs of....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forgetting • Difficulty following instructions • Task abandonment • Daydreaming 										

For more information and practical examples see:

Understanding Working Memory – A Classroom Guide, a free booklet published by Susan Gathercole & Tracy Alloway

Working Memory: A Practical Guide for Teachers, a book published by Susan Gathercole & Tracy Alloway