



# Humber Sensory Processing Service

Community Services for Children  
aged 0-18 years



**Auditory processing and memory games**

Being able to remember information we see and hear is an important skill. Some children find it easier to remember information they see (visual memory), while others prefer to hear (auditory memory). For others, it is best to use both. Knowing your child's preference will help you when giving instructions.

## Auditory processing

Children who have trouble recalling and using information they hear are said to have auditory processing difficulties. Some general strategies for helping these children include:

- Alert the child to listen before beginning the message. You could use a visual prompt or cue.
- Give one direction at a time.
- Use short, simple, one-concept phrases to give directions. Do not elaborate. Repeat verbal instructions slowly, firmly, and clearly. Ask the child to repeat the instruction back to you.
- Wait a little longer than you think is necessary to give the child time to analyse the command and put it into action.
- Give visual demonstration or physical assistance.
- Reduce auditory distractions – be aware of paper shuffling, pencils dropping, etc. Some children like to use earplugs or headphones to reduce distractions.
- Limit the time that focused auditory attention is required – it can be quite tiring for a child when they have to work hard all the time to try to understand what is being said.
- Sit the child close to what they are listening to.



It is important to believe the child if they say they don't know or didn't hear, repeat the message without impatience. Make time to give your child attention and to build up their self-esteem. Learning environments can be extremely challenging for a child with Auditory Processing Difficulties (APD). These strategies may help in this environment:

- Watch the child's facial expression while you talk. Look for signs that show 'they are lost'. A 'glazed look' means not understanding. It's SOSS = Stop, Organise, use Short Sentences.
- Check understanding by seeing what they do, not by asking about it.
- Allow extra time for writing and copying.
- Summarise main points frequently during class discussions.
- Provide written content of lessons, when possible, for children who are able to read.
- Ensure that homework details are heard and noted accurately.

### **When the child can't blend sounds or get started with reading:**

- Use very short sentences for pre-reading experiences and conversation.
- Ask questions which are short and straight forward.
- Allow time for reply.
- Accommodate variations in readiness.

### **When reading is a challenge:**

- Chunk longer words.
- Emphasise whole word methods if visual skills are good.



- Read aloud, modelling good natural intonation and phrasing.
- Teach the child to think as they read, pausing at punctuation marks.

## Games to improve processing skills

- Recognising environmental sounds, animal noises, instrument sounds, etc – try playing sound lotto, used taped sounds.
- Use rhythm and beat to improve the child's memory. Give directions or teach facts by substituting your own words to a familiar tune. For example, to the tune of 'Mary had a Little Lamb' sing 'Now it's time to wash your face, brush your teeth, comb your hair, now it's time to put on clothes, so start with underwear!'
- Place objects on a table, and have your child pick them up as they are mentioned in a story.
- Memory apps on devices.
- Simon says games. This can be an app or adult supported – develop listening skills.
- Ask your child to clap/ put a counter in a pot when they hear a given word/ phrase in a story.
- Spotting the wrong word in a story (e.g., Goldilocks and the three "tears").
- Traffic light games, call "red" – children sit, call "green" children run, call "amber" children hop, etc. Musical instrument sounds can also be used instead of colours.
- Stand behind the child and bounce a ball several times. See if they can tell you how many times you bounced it.
- Say several pairs of words to your child (e.g., peg, peg: peg, egg). If



they hear you say two words the same, they put their hands in the air (or any other action you like!)

- Hide a loudly ticking clock or radio with the volume turned down and see how quickly your child can find it.
- Ask your child to close their eyes and listen to a sound that you will make (e.g., shake a rattle, ring a bell, open a door, shake keys, drop a pencil), then try to guess what the sound is.

**"I find it really hard to know what people are saying, especially when its busy. When my friends give me a bit of time to work out what they have said, I don't feel as bad about myself."**

## Games to improve sequencing skills

The following games aim to improve visual and auditory sequencing skills (i.e., being able to remember several pieces of information, in order). Start simply, and gradually increase the amount of key information your child needs to remember. For example, "get your shoes and your coat" contains two key pieces of information, while "get your black shoes and your blue coat" has four key pieces of information. Activities should be done "little and often" so as not to make your child over-tired and discouraged.



**Auditory Memory** is important when being given verbal instructions:

- Play “Simon Says” type games, using a sequence of instructions. Gradually increase how many pieces of information you give:
  1. “Jump, then hop” or “two jumps.” (2 pieces)
  2. “Jump, hop, clap your hands” or “two jumps and clap your hands.” (3 pieces).
  3. “Jump twice, clap once then hop.” (4 pieces) etc.
- Play clapping / rhythm games – start simply, and gradually increase complexity.
- Play the shopping game - the first person says, “I went to the shop and bought apples”. The second person repeats this and adds another purchase (e.g., “I went to the shop and bought apples and milk”), and so on.
- Ask your child to identify when a well-known sequence (e.g., numbers, days of the week, months of the year) is out of order (e.g., Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Wednesday, Friday).
- Tell your child a simple story and ask them to retell the story in the correct order, or answer a question asked at the beginning.
- Repeating a series of random numbers or letters - up to 6 forward and 4 backward.

**Visual Memory** is important for tasks such as spelling or copying:

- Memory tray - place a group of common objects on a tray, then cover and remove one. Which one is missing? Gradually increase the number of items on the tray or remove more than one at a time.
- Ask your child to pay close attention to a television commercial. At the end of it, ask him questions about what he has seen (eg “what



product were they advertising?”, “what colour shirt was the man wearing?”)

- Play games such as “concentration” with cards placed in rows – increase the number of pairs/cards you use as your child is better able to recall positions.
- “Sequences” – place common objects, coloured beads/blocks/cars in a row. Cover the objects, and ask your child to tell you the order, or to place a matching set of objects into the same order. Make this easier / harder by:
  - decreasing/increasing the number of objects.
  - giving them just the right number of matching objects.
  - giving them a bigger set of objects to choose from.
  - Show your child a picture, then turn it over and ask them to:
    - Tell you what the picture was about.
    - Tell you what the picture was about.
    - Draw what they saw from memory.
    - Tell you how many of an item there were.
    - Tell you what colour an object was.
    - Tell you where an object was.

