

8 Working Memory Boosters

By [Amanda Morin](#)

At a Glance

- Working memory refers to how we manipulate information stored in short-term memory.
- Kids use working memory to learn and follow directions.
- Working-memory boosters can be built into your child's daily life.

Does your child have a hard time remembering directions or math facts? Does he often forget what he wants to say? If so, [he might have working memory issues](#).

[Working memory](#) refers to the manipulation of information that short-term memory stores. (In the past, the term "working memory" was used interchangeably with the term "short-term memory.") It's [a skill kids use to learn](#). You can help your child improve his recall by building some working memory boosters into his daily life.

1. Teach visualization skills.

Encourage your child to create a picture of what he's just read or heard. For example, if you've told him to set the table for five people, ask him to come up with a picture in his head of what the table should look like. Then have him draw that picture. As he gets better at visualizing, he can start describing the image to you instead of drawing it.

2. Have your child teach you.

Being able to explain how to do something involves making sense of information and mentally filing it. If he's learning a skill, like how to dribble a basketball, ask him to teach it to you after his coach explains it to him.

3. Suggest games that use visual memory.

Give your child a magazine page and ask him to circle all instances of the word "the" or the letter "a" in one minute. Alternatively, play games in the car in which one of you recites the letters and numbers on a license plate you see and then has to say it backwards, too.

4. Play cards.

Simple card games like Crazy Eights, Uno, Go Fish and War improve working memory in two ways. Your child has to keep the rules of the game in mind, but also has to remember what cards he has and which ones other people have played.

5. Make up category games.

When words and ideas are put into categories, they're easier to remember. Playing games in which you name as many animals as you can think of can eventually lead to playing games with more complicated concepts. For example, you may ask your child to name as many clue words for addition as she can (such as "all together," "in all," "total" and "plus").

6. Number your directions.

Beginning a sentence with words like "I need you to do three things..." can help your child keep all of the different points in his head. You can do the same thing with other information, too, like shopping lists ("We need to buy these five items...").

7. Connect emotion to information.

Processing information in as many ways as possible can help your child remember it. Help him connect feelings to what he's trying to remember. For instance, if he's learning about how the pyramids in ancient Egypt were built, ask him to think about what it felt like to have to climb to the top of one of them pulling a heavy stone in the hot sun.

8. Help make connections.

Connections are the relationship between things. Finding ways to connect what your child is trying to remember with things he already knows can help him learn the new material.

Memory-boosting tricks and games are just some of the ways you can help improve your child's executive functioning skills.

Key Takeaways

- Teaching your child ways to visualize thoughts can help improve his working memory.
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- Fun activities like card games and word association games can help build working memory.
 - Connecting information to emotions and things your child already knows can help him remember things better.

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