

## **TIPS FOR LEARNING NEW VOCABULARY & DEVELOPING WORKING MEMORY**

Visual cues can often be very useful to help a child to learn new vocabulary and to develop their working memory skills. 'Working memory' is the skill we use when we 'hold' a number of pieces of information at one time and then manipulate them. Working memory also affects a child's auditory memory which is a person's memory for things that they hear. Children with working memory difficulties will commonly find it very difficult to carry out longer more complex instructions (i.e. 'John can you do X and then Y, but don't forget to also do Z').

These instructions will need to be reinforced by repetition with visual and/or gestural cues. Difficulties in working memory may affect a child's ability to concentrate during group discussions or story time/circle time. In addition, they are likely to find it harder to rote learn new rhymes, lyrics of songs for concerts or lines they might need to learn in a drama event. Working memory difficulties may also impact on a child's ability to develop literacy skills as a child needs to listen to several sounds in a particular order, remember them in order and then blend them together to read or spell a word (e.g. f-l-i-p - flip).

### **Use this activity to help a child to learn new vocabulary and develop working memory skills.**

1. Use the prompt board and pictures provided.
2. Cut out the pictures and laminate them and the board so that the activity is durable.
3. Start with 6 pictures and place them face down on the table. As the child becomes more confident and their working memory improves increase the number of pictures that you use.
4. Take it in turns to read the open sentence at the top of the prompt board page (e.g. I went to the zoo and I saw...). You don't need to expect your child to read the words, but encourage them to point to the words as they say them to help them to learn the process of reading.
5. When you have read the sentence, select a picture from the table, name it and place it on the prompt board (e.g. I went to the zoo and I saw an elephant).
6. At each turn add another picture to the board, naming the pictures already on the board first and then adding a new picture (e.g. I went to the zoo and I saw an elephant, a lion and a monkey).
7. Once all 6 pictures have been placed on the board continue the activity by turning over the last card so that it is face down. Repeat the sentence and name the items and when you get to the picture that is face down, encourage the child to remember it.



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8. On each person's turn, turn over another picture so that you are eventually having to remember all of the pictures in the correct order.

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