



“Bright but needs to concentrate!”

Have you ever wondered why some children can concentrate and finish their homework on time, while others need to be chased around the room? In the last ten to twelve years, neuroscientists and psychologists have made advancements in this area of brain research. We now know that this inability to concentrate is called ‘Working Memory Deficit.’

What is Working Memory?

Working memory is our active short term memory. We use it to remember and workout information. For example, when we are asked to do a mental maths question, we hold on to the numbers and functions whilst manipulating the answer.

What might indicate someone that someone has poor working memory?

Unable to keep track of time (i.e. forget how much time they have left, or should work to), Overwhelmed with verbally presented instructions or lists, Easily distracted, Trouble waiting his/her turn, Struggles with completing tasks, especially multi-step tasks, Is inconsistent with maths facts, Has difficulty with taking notes and reading/listening at the same time.

Why does poor working memory affect concentration?

Think of your working memory as a malleable container

of limited capacity which has a lid/filter to control what goes in or out. Those with poor working memory have an even smaller capacity and a dubious filter. Having a smaller capacity means they can only manipulate small amounts of information at any one time. The ineffective lid/filter cannot hold on to the information that goes in and it seeps out.

If information cannot be held and manipulated properly, the result is loss of concentration. With the right training, you can gradually increase the capacity and control the filter over time.

What can help the situation?

We can employ strategies to help children with poor concentration keep on track.

Here are 3 simple things you can do in the home.

Leaving the house on time a problem? Draw a clock face with the target time you want your child to leave by. Your child can refer to the drawing instead of asking you.

Not able to follow the homework time table? Use colours for each day. Red is Monday - Maths homework is on ‘Red Day’.

Not keeping to task? Use a special clock called Timed Timer. It helps visualise the remaining time left on a task, so that your child can ‘see’ the pending urgency.

In place of verbal information, replace it with visual cues. Use colours and drawings. Be creative and make them fun.

Working memory training does, however, require specialist training. You might consider Cogmed Working Memory Training, a software programme designed by neuroscientists who specialise in working memory research. The programme is presented in the form of repetitive games/memory tasks and adaptive to the user, making memory tasks more challenging if they prove to be too easy, or reduced in complexity if they are too challenging.

Training can be completed in 25 sessions over five weeks and is suited to children from 4, through to adults.

Where can I obtain more information?

For more information on working memory deficit, please visit the website at www.ravivpracticelondon.co.uk. There is a questionnaire designed for children and another available for adults on request.

For more information about Cogmed Working Memory Training or to book a session, please contact **Usha Patel**, Learning Difficulties Therapist on **07755 837 616**. Usha is a qualified and authorised Cogmed Coach.

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Raviv Practice London Raviv Practice London will be holding a free presentation on learning difficulties 7th March 2013