



Short-Term Verbal Memory: Rehearsal, Rehearsal, Rehearsal

A key aspect of short-term verbal memory is the ability to repeat / rehearse back 'in our head' what we have just heard. This helps us to 'keep in mind' or 'replay' what someone has just said so that we can follow a series of instructions, or better understand what someone has just said. Helping the child to strengthen their short-term verbal memory will especially help to improve their speech and language abilities. To develop this ability, we need to provide the child with regular practice at rehearsing spoken directions / lists. Games that require the child to repeat words over and over to themselves include:

Treasure Hunt. Here, the child is given a 'treasure list' of items to collect from another classroom, room or area. Before they go, it is important you ask them to repeat back the list of items they have to get, and promote them to keep saying these words as they go. See how many they can get in 5 minutes (2+ items at a time).

Picture Hunt. This is similar to the *Treasure Hunt* game. Place a range of picture cards on the table and ask the child to find 2 or more at a time. If there are enough cards, they will need to repeat the words over and over to help them not forget while looking through to find those they want. Use counters to count up how many they can get right in 3+ minutes. This is also good for vocabulary development.

Robot. Give the child a series of instructions to move about. For example '*Robot X... move two steps forward, tap your nose, and jump to your left*'. Make sure all the instructions have been given before the child starts, and promote them to say these instructions back to themselves as they move through the actions.

I went to the market and I bought...

- You start by saying "I went to the market and I bought... an *apple*".
- The child then says "I went to the market and I bought... an *apple*, and a *car*".
- Play continues with each of you repeating the list you have just heard and adding one item to the shopping list.

Story Repeat. Read a story aloud to the child. After each sentence, ask the child to repeat this word for word. Over time, increase the length of the sentences to stretch their capacity.

