



## SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH LOW WORKING MEMORY

### WHAT IS WORKING MEMORY?

Working memory is the ability to hold information in the mind long enough to use it. It plays a critical role in reading, spelling, writing, math, and following directions. When working memory is weak, learning can be challenging even for capable and motivated students.



### SUPPORTS AND ACTIVITIES AT SCHOOL

- Give directions one step at a time and ask students to repeat them.
- Pair oral directions with visuals or checklists.
- Use consistent routines and instructional language.
- Reduce copying demands from the board.
- Allow students to talk through steps out loud.
- Use sound to print routines with counters or manipulatives.
- Reread short decodable texts multiple times.
- Teach students what to do when reading or spelling feels hard.



### SUPPORTS AND ACTIVITIES AT HOME

- Use visual schedules for morning and bedtime routines.
- Give one direction at a time and wait for completion.
- Ask your child to repeat the direction before starting.
- Play memory based games such as *Simon Says* or matching games.
- Cook or prepare snacks together using step by step directions.
- Encourage your child to say sounds out loud before reading or spelling.
- Use supportive language such as: *"let's break this into smaller parts"*.





## SIGNS A CHILD MAY HAVE LOW WORKING MEMORY



- ❗ Difficulty following multi step directions.  
*They may complete the first step but forget the rest.*
- ❗ Trouble retaining information long enough to use it.  
*They may lose steps in a task or forget the beginning of a sentence.*
- ❗ Frequent need for repetition or reminders.  
*They often ask what to do again.*
- ❗ Struggles with holding sounds in mind during decoding or encoding.
- ❗ Difficulty copying from the board or transferring information accurately.
- ❗ Losing track during conversations or stories, and difficulty retelling.
- ❗ Slow processing when juggling more than one piece of information.
- ❗ Easily overwhelmed by complex tasks, and may shut down or avoid them.
- ❗ Inconsistent performance that fluctuates with stress and fatigue.

