

## *Memory*

Memory is a large component of the kindergarten program. Building memory accomplishes a variety of goals including engaging the brain, improving thinking skills, lengthening attention span and concentration and building memory banks for letters, sounds, sight words, poems, songs, rhyming words, social studies and science facts and concepts, shapes, patterns, graphs, numbers and many number concepts. All of our memory activities help build a foundation for future learning. Some children are very lucky and are born with the ability to remember easily, for others it is more difficult. But the fact is, no matter where a child starts, memory can improve. (This depends on how much your child is expected to memorize in the early years 0-6yrs). That's why learning nursery rhymes, songs, phone numbers, spelling of one's name and introducing letters and numbers is a good idea before starting school. Once a child hits kindergarten it becomes more critical to build memory in order to function well in school.

No matter what memory task a child is working on, it engages the brain and begins to improve thinking skills. The more a child is able to memorize, the more concentration and attention it takes. Hopefully this will increase general ability to concentrate and pay attention.

Building a memory bank for phone numbers and addresses is good for your child's safety. It enables a child to help if he/she ever gets lost or heaven forbid kidnaped. Be sure to teach your child how to get an operator on a pay phone. Learning telephone numbers also helps children memorize numbers and begin to see symbols in groups (321)-(454)-(1080). This is very similar to letter groups which form words.

Building a memory bank of letters, sounds, sight words, rhyming words, songs and poems all help with reading skills. Learning letters, sounds and sight words helps build a couple of different reading strategies that make more efficient readers. Learning poems and songs helps build mind pictures for comprehension, vocabulary and teach about the rhythm of language. Rhyming words and word families teach children about word chunks in our language and help them build inferences about language. All of this builds a variety of reading strategies that will enable learning to read become a natural process.

When many different strategies are used simultaneously reading becomes more efficient, with better fluency and becomes easier to comprehend. This is where thinking skills come in. Using prior knowledge (what a child already knows) and inferences he/she has learned about our language is half of the battle of making reading easy and fun. Confidence makes up another big segment and the basic skills learned finishes off the reading process.

Building a memory bank for shapes, patterns, graphs, numbers and a variety of math concepts builds a good base for future math concepts. Not only does it help in the future, it is critical to understanding math now and each step of the way. Remember, you can not leave out steps when building a staircase.

Is building memory important? You bet it is! It is probably the single most critical aspect of learning and overall school achievement. Some might believe thinking skills should come first, except memory builds these skills. You can think without memorizing, but you can't memorize without thinking. Please remember how important it is as you work with your child. You are helping build a foundation for all future learning. Don't give up- It is your child's future. Step by step your child will get there. The more you are involved in helping your child the first three years of school- the more confident and independent they will become.