

Family Living

The Portland Observer

Parenting For Education

24 ways to strengthen a weak memory in classroom learning

BY VIVIAN OWENS

What if memory wires were like ropes? Imagine a strong, sturdy rope capable of holding a few tons, and then imagine a frayed, frazzled one unable to hold more than a few ounces. To some extent, school children experience this sturdiness or weakness every time they attempt to tie together learning and memory.

Memory is far more than memorizing spelling words or stanzas from Dunbar's poetry. A child needs to remember how to divide fractions or how to mix paints. Sometimes he needs to remember to do homework, and at other times she has to remember where she left the social studies book necessary to do her homework.

Like anyone, older children find themselves in situations where their memory seems weak. When parents notice a continuous display of weak

memory, they should take action. Try the following ideas yourself and share them with your child.

1. Write a word or number down on a card. Refer to the card frequently.

2. Recite silently the number or word several times before putting it away. Return to it later for another recital.

3. Recite "it" orally several times.

4. Orally discuss "it" with someone else who is also interested in the details of your topic.

5. Study "it" and make associations which stimulate instant recall.

6. Sing "it" and create a jingle. Rehearse the song at every available opportunity.

7. Remove distractions and allow yourself time to concentrate when you need to memorize or remember something. Give yourself a noise-free environment if possible, or a soft music setting if you know

music helps.

8. Worries and anxieties handicap memory. Rid yourself of worries before you set about a memory task by writing the worries down on paper and sticking the worry list into a brown paper bag. Set the bag outside of your work door and accept permission to return to it, after you've concentrated on your needed topic.

9. Consider good nutrition as essential to a good memory. A sluggish, over-fed body does not function well, and neither does an under-fed body. Adequate proteins in food promote alertness.

10. A good night's sleep or a catnap in the late afternoon will give the brain the rest and restoration it needs to perform for you.

11. Read and reread an item you want to remember. Reading gives you the connective tissue necessary

for recall and link.

12. Eliminate medical reasons as a cause for weak memory. Often, poor memory in children or adults arise from medical conditions, which can sometimes be corrected.

13. Develop systems for memorizing names, faces, numbers, poems, long lists, short lists, facts, procedures, or other items by using association techniques.

14. Develop a method which links one item to something very vivid in your imagination, allowing you a quick and easy retrieval.

15. Distinguish between those items that require memorization and those that require familiarity.

16. Know what type of memory you need for an item. Do you need a detailed, replica of an item, or do you need a flashback recall? Do you need a short term or long term memory for a particular item?

17. Learn to observe. People observe with the mind and see with the eye. Teach children to observe as they see. Ask them questions as they look at things, requiring them to look for detail in observation. Point out details which they might overlook.

18. Reduce absentmindedness by becoming aware of what you're doing during a given moment. Require yourself to consciously observe where you put something.

19. From routines or habits for certain actions in order to eliminate some forgetfulness.

20. Have a place for everything and keep everything in its place.

21. Mind sounds. Allow sounds to help you remember things.

22. For numbers, practice the art of grouping or sequencing particularly if you have a long list. Set a rhythm to these numbers.

23. Play games. For an evening of

family socializing try this: With all family members seated in a circle, one person starts a story with names and events, and the next person retells the story up to that point and continues by adding another part of the story. The story continues with each family member adding another piece after he/she has retold all of the previous pieces. Continue this for two rounds. Use this same technique for number practice or learning capitols of the United States or other long lists. Also, engage the family in store bought games of various types, including card game specially designed for young children.

24. Don't confuse situations that require reasoning for situations that require memorizing. For example, you reason in problem solving and will not understand a particular problem by memorizing the steps of a given sample.

Bridge building contest

The holiday season is upon us. Kids are leaving school for winter vacation—a break for everyone but parents, who are frantically searching for ideas to keep kids productive. Why not harness that youthful creativity and energy into building a bridge?

GTE is sponsoring a bridge building contest open to the residents of Clackamas, Ore.; Multnomah, Ore.; Washington, Ore.; and Clark, Wash., counties—to celebrate the first telephone directory to combine the Portland and Van-

cover markets.

Bridges may be constructed of any material and may be any size. Each bridge must incorporate a GTE The Everything Pages telephone directory. (One directory per team may be obtained by calling 1-800-888-8448).

First prize is a Circuit City gift certificate worth \$3,000, second prize is a gift certificate worth \$1,800 and third prize is a gift certificate worth \$1,200.

All entries must be received by January 15, 1997. Send photo(s) or

video of your creation, along with your name, address, and a daytime phone number, to "GTE Directories Bridge Building Contest", c/o The Everything Pages telephone directory, (One directory per team may be obtained by calling 1-800-888-8448).

Prospective entrants may call Cathie Ericson at (503) 226-6855 with any questions and for official contest rules.

For more information, please contact Greg Ness, GTE Directories, (206) 670-6006; or Cathie Ericson, The Rocky Company; (503) 226-6855.

People are standing for children all over America

BY MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN

Many of those who journeyed to Washington, D.C. on June 1 to Stand For Children, are keeping their promises now that they have returned home. In communities from California to New York and from Alaska to Florida, they've formed Stand For Children Action Teams (CATs) to improve the lives of children.

Here are examples of what some CATs have been doing around the country since June 1.

* The Philadelphia School District's Office of Curriculum Support developed and distributed a Stand For Children Activity Guide for Teachers, which urges teachers to focus classroom work on children and their concerns.

* Guilford County, N.C. residents are publishing a quarterly Stand For Children newsletter, keeping citizens aware of children's needs.

* In Ft. Myers, Fla., the CAT is organizing a Children's Summit titled "Let The Children Speak," to provide an opportunity for children to talk about what is important to them; host a Children's Sabbath, which brought

together ministers and families of various denominations to address how people of faith can act to protect children; created a legislative action group to identify areas of crucial need and to meet with legislators to keep them informed about children's needs and citizen's expectations; and started a child policy group that sends volunteers to every local government meeting, wearing their "Stand" T-shirts.

* The Rochester Red Wings, a minor league baseball team, and the Rochester Area Children's Collaborative joined forces to plan a local Stand For Children Day on August 18. A procession of children marched around the stadium displaying banners that portrayed what standing for children means to them.

* A Children's Policy summit held in Sacramento, Calif., on Oct. 9-11 was designed to set out a vision for children for the 21st century. The summit was attended by more than 500 people.

* The New York Office of the Children's Defense Fund, co-sponsored a Stand For Children Conference on Oct. 25 with Columbia University, to

help grassroots leaders, advocates, and other concerned citizens plan and implement their next action steps.

* The Mahoning County, Ohio, CATs hosted a Candidates' Forum Night. In April 1997, the CATs plan to host a local telethon to help child-serving agencies recruit volunteers. Ohio has been holding a number of candidates' forums, along with other states, such as Maine and Delaware.

* In Michigan, children's advocates sponsored a Stand For Children rally on Oct. 5 that drew more than 3,000 people.

Using a variety of Stand For Children products—including T-shirts, buttons, and stickers—as fundraisers to help support local efforts, Stand is encouraging people to constantly think about ways to help local children. Whether its through mentoring, tutoring or voting, we can create safe neighborhoods for children. To learn how you can join or form a CATs group in your community, visit Stand For Children, 1834 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009, call 1-800-663-4032, or visit the Stand For Children Web site at www.stand.org.

What better gift than a book

As a child I fell in love with reading. Our home was always full of good books because my parents considered them necessities, not luxuries. Through them, I was able to visit faraway lands, meet famous historical characters, and learn about my culture and the world around me.

The Christmas and Kwanzaa season is a perfect time to introduce your children to the joys of reading. We are being flooded with advertisements for high-cost, high-tech games and gizmos that will be obsolete and forgotten in a month or two. But books last forever. The same books that captured my imagination as a child are as vivid and exciting today as they were then. The books we share with children in the Black Community Crusade for Children's (BCCC) Summer Freedom Schools

are designed to teach powerful lessons about self, family, values, community, country and the world. The Freedom School reading list is a great place to begin looking for gift books for the children in your life.

Give books as gifts, and as your children become adults, they will thank you for sparking their love for reading—and for giving them the

chance to pass this wonderful tradition on to their children.

Marian Wright Edelman is president of the Children's Defense Fund and a Working Committee member of the Black Community Crusade for Children, whose mission is to leave no child behind. For more information, write the BCCC, 25 E. Street, N.W. 20001, or call 202-628-8787.

Holiday Savings

Prices Effective 12/18/96 thru 12/24/96 at your nearby Safeway store.



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The Greatest Disaster is Being Underinsured.

If this were your home, would your insurance company rebuild it? Chances are the answer is no — if you live in an African American, Latino or integrated neighborhood, and your home was built before 1950. If your homeowners insurance company refuses to provide full replacement coverage, that could be insurance discrimination. Check your policy.



FAIR HOUSING IS THE LAW!

If you suspect unfair housing practices, contact HUD or your local Fair Housing Center. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 1-800-669-9777 • TDD 1-800-927-9275