

## SHORT TERM MEMORY DIFFICULTIES WITH NEUROFIBROMATOSIS TYPE1 (NF1)

Children with Nf1 are prone to experience disruption of their short term or “working memory” due to the condition.

Where the neuro-typical child might retain information after reading/ hearing it three or four times – the child who has Nf1 may need the information repeated 20 to 30 times, and they may still struggle to retain it.

The Nf1 child may appear to understand lessons in class but, come homework time, can have no memory of the work. Likewise, when it comes to assessments/ exams the child can practice at home and understand everything - only to fail the test at school.

The problem lies with the shift from short term to long term memory. Once something is in the long-term memory the child usually has no problem retrieving the information but the transference from short to long term can take much longer than average.

The longer an item stays in short term the stronger its association becomes in long term memory. However, if the child is given too many “new” pieces of information it can push older data out before ever reaching long term.

Students with memory problems are often frustrated and tempted to give up.

## WAYS TO HELP THE CHILD WITH MEMORY DISABILITIES:

- Break down the information into smaller steps
- Review previous lessons as often as possible until responses become automatic
- Record lessons so the child can listen several times
- Overlearning is the key to remembering information
- Don't assume the child will remember tomorrow what they learned today
- Don't assume because the child has difficulty learning something today that they will be unable to learn it tomorrow
- Nf1 causes inconsistency with memory problems
- Don't give directions while the child is doing something else. Wait until you have their full attention
- You may need to repeat directions step by step and then have the child repeat them back to you
- Teach the child to use visualisation to recall
- Teach the child how to make notes and lists to help remember information
- Provide charts showing math facts or a calculator which the child can use when teaching a new math process to avoid interfering with new learning