



## Helping Students with Brain Injury

Memory loss is very common. Mild brain injuries can result in short-term memory deficits, while moderate and severe injuries can cause both short-term and long-term memory deficits. Memory is often decreased after a brain injury since attention, concentration and organizational skills are usually affected. This results in difficulty learning new material, retaining it, and being able to retrieve information upon command. For example, a student may need many repetitions of material before grasping a concept, forget the information a day later, or not be able to recall information spontaneously. Yet this student may still demonstrate knowledge of the material on a multiple choice test.

*The following are sample strategies you can use. It is important to remember that all brain injuries are unique and that all students have different strengths and weaknesses, therefore different strategies may or may not work depending on the student, the class, and the time of day, among other factors. It is important to remain flexible in trying different strategies until you find one that works for that student, and to always keep in mind the ultimate goal of moving students towards independence. Once you have found a strategy that works use it consistently and share it with others who work with that student.*

Difficulty with...	Strategy/Accommodation	Example
Short-term recall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Homework book and notes (teacher writing down homework, making assignments available online, homework hotline)</li> <li>➤ Calendar, electronic organizer</li> <li>➤ Repeat directions, provide cueing to help with memory (begins with the letter “s”), write down directions</li> <li>➤ Audio recorder</li> <li>➤ Lists and checklists</li> <li>➤ Diary, journal, memory or log book for what the student does at home (to aid in social skill development) and school</li> </ul>	<p>Dave forgets what transpired throughout the day, including what happened in class and what is due for homework. ’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Dave keeps a homework notebook/calendar that includes work due the next day, upcoming tests and quiz dates, project due dates, etc. His aid checks it at the end of each class.</li> <li>➤ Dave holds a calendar that contains all important dates.</li> <li>➤ Dave’s teacher reviews his homework notebook to make sure directions are included.</li> <li>➤ Dave tapes daily lectures in case there is something he forgets.</li> <li>➤ Dave has a notebook that contains a list of all things he needs to remember.</li> <li>➤ Dave writes his own summary of class at the end of each day to reinforce what was learned.</li> </ul>
Names		Bob forgets the names of teachers even though they look

		familiar.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Memory books with pictures of teachers, their name and the subject they teach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Bob has a picture of each teacher and their name on different colored subject notebooks.</li> </ul>
Scheduling		Sue forgets what classes are at what time, despite having been in school for several days or weeks.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Daily schedule</li> <li>➤ Map of the school, class schedule, and locker combination permanently in student's backpack</li> <li>➤ Watches and timers</li> <li>➤ Consistency and organization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Lisa has a laminated schedule on each of his notebooks.</li> <li>➤ Sue has a laminated schedule with a map and locker combination taped to the back of her notebooks.</li> <li>➤ Andrew is reminded of how long he has to do certain tasks by using a watch.</li> <li>➤ Sue has the same schedule each day, with a laminated copy attached to her organizer.</li> </ul>
Prospective Memory or Planning Ahead		Bill shows up for the class field trip and is told that he can't go because he has forgotten to get a permission slip, take it home, have it signed by a parent and returned to school.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Develop/monitor student notebook with organizers, math step cards, schedules, calendars, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Bill keeps an organizer that includes important deadlines, including permission slips, upcoming class trips, projects, etc.</li> </ul>
New learning		Sally can remember how to do addition and subtraction but multiplication taught after the injury is difficult to comprehend and/or memorize.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Scaffolding – building upon existing learning</li> <li>➤ Rhyming and mnemonic techniques</li> <li>➤ Provide information more slowly</li> <li>➤ Repetition, frequent review and multi-modality presentation (auditory and visual)</li> <li>➤ Relating new information to learned information</li> <li>➤ Clustering information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The teacher builds on the math Sally knows to build up to learning multiplication</li> <li>➤ The teacher helps Sally come up with different terms to remember information.</li> <li>➤ The teacher tries to slow down as she is speaking.</li> <li>➤ The teacher repeats the main points several times.</li> <li>➤ Sue re-reads old outlines before moving on to the new chapter.</li> <li>➤ Sue's teacher groups her history events into different timelines.</li> </ul>

- Predictable classroom routines and procedures
- The teacher teaches in a consistent manner, running the classroom the same each day.

## Adapting the strategies for the IEP

The IEP focuses on academic and/or functional areas affected in the school setting, with the goal of establishing measurable academic and/or functional goals. These goals include benchmark or short-term objectives, as well as criteria for measuring and evaluating the objective. It also includes modifications and supplementary aids, including assistive technology devices and services. As there have been numerous advancements in technology in recent years an assistive technology evaluation should be a consideration for all areas of impairment, including physical and cognitive impairments. *It is important to keep in mind that the IEP should be a fluid document, re-assessed regularly and able to be modified if strategies being utilized are not having the desired effect.*

*Example:*

**Academic and/or Functional Area:** Memory

**Annual Measurable Academic and/or Functional Goal:** Able to review a daily checklist independently for 10 consecutive days by June 30.

**Benchmark or Short-Term Objectives:** Able to review a daily checklist with cueing for 10 consecutive days by November 30.

**Criteria:** Progress noted in progress report 4 times a year.

**Evaluation:** 3 out of 5 trials/observations.

**Modification/Supplementary Aid:** A checklist is available at all times at the student's desk.

**Academic and/or Functional Area:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Annual Measurable Academic and/or Functional Goal:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Benchmark or Short-Term Objectives:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Criteria:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Evaluation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Modification/Supplementary Aid:** \_\_\_\_\_



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HELPLINE  
1-800-669-4323

*"Helping Students with Brain Injury"* is a series developed by the Children & Adolescents Committee of the Brain Injury Alliance of New Jersey. To view additional sheets in the series, visit [www.bianj.org/helping-students-with-brain-injury](http://www.bianj.org/helping-students-with-brain-injury).