

What is Processing Speed?

It has been compared to a clerk or clerical worker within our brain, helping us to carry out jobs as quickly and as efficiently as possible. It is associated with the speed and accuracy of visual scanning, tracking and discrimination skills.

Processing speed has a strong relationship with the development of literacy and numeracy skills. These become automatic and we can apply them to more complex tasks. A number of factors can affect processing speed, such as hearing, vision, motor skills and concentration.

What are some signs of Processing Speed difficulties?

- Slower performance when reading, completing calculations and making decisions.
- Needing extra time to complete tasks, particularly if copying or transferring information.
- Difficulties with proof-reading and recognising errors and omissions.
- Appearing tired, distracted or overwhelmed by effortful scanning and tracking.
- Lack of automaticity when conversing with others and following daily routines.

Time & Structure



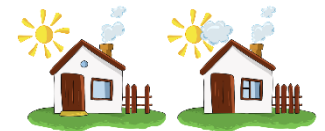
- Shorten classwork & homework tasks and schedule breaks.
- Focus on quality over quantity of work completed.
- Provide extra time to scan over unfamiliar text & respond to questions.
- Give advanced warning of verbal questions and additional thinking time.
- Add structure to discussions through sample answers and using other students' responses as a model.
- Consider checklists and verbal/visual routines to build organisational skills.

Alleviate & Differentiate



- Reduce environmental distractions and declutter worksheets.
- Chunk tasks - set achievable goals and show samples of the end product.
- Provide handouts and notes to minimise copying from one source to another.
- Make written information stand out using larger font, colour-coding and explicit numbering/labelling.
- Alternative outputs: verbal/typed responses; multiple choice; true/false.
- Allow for practise with access arrangements for formal examinations.

PROCESSING SPEED



Practise & Play

- Use timed activities (flash cards, puzzles, computer games) to self-monitor speed.
- Play matching or sorting games with letters, words or pictures.
- Word searches and "Where's Wally?" can develop visual scanning skills.
- Teach discrimination through spot-the-difference games or categories (mark only the vehicles on a page of animals, vehicles and clothes).
- Use verbal descriptions and instructions to help students find specific features of an object or picture.