

Neurodiversity Home 101:

Metacognition & linking learning

Metacognition means **'thinking about thinking'**. This is a **very useful skill** to learn as it can help with school-work but also with everyday activities and problems. However, it is a skill – no one is born an expert at it. Some children will find metacognition more challenging to pick up than others. Model it (show yourself doing it) and give your child plenty of opportunity to practice. To help your child learn metacognitive skills:

Self-awareness:

- Encourage your child to think about their strengths and the things they find challenging.
 - If they find this difficult, you can make some suggestions.
- Use this self-awareness to make plans:
 - How could they use their strengths to support themselves and others?
 - How could they get better at things they find challenging?
- Encourage your child to reflect before starting a task:
 - What do I know about problems like this?
 - How did I solve a similar problem last time?
 - What might be the best way to do this?
 - Where might be the best place to start?
 - Do I need anything to do this task?
- Encourage your child to regularly monitor themselves when doing a task:
 - How well is this going?
 - Did I choose the right method?
 - Did I choose the right order?
 - Do I need to change anything to get this done?
- Encourage your child to evaluate a task when they finish:
 - Did that go as I planned?
 - What went well?

- What went wrong?
- How could I do it better next time?

Planning:

- Bullet-pointed lists can be a good way to jot down ideas and plan tasks.
- Mind maps are good for planning and linking tasks and ideas.
- Colour-coding can be added, to group points by topic, etc.
- Numbers can be added, to indicate the best order for the task to be approached.
- If ideas need to be jotted down then sorted or grouped, writing them on post-it notes then physically sorting the post-it notes into groups can help.
- Talking through a plan or method can help to make it clearer – this can be discussing ideas with another person but sometimes just talking (to the dog, to yourself) works too.
- Making a keyword list or word bank can be helpful with specialist topics.

