



Executive Functioning

These are higher level brain functions that take place in the frontal lobe. You use this part of your brain when you plan, organize, pay attention, or remember details. Kids with ADHD often have trouble with executive function. Executive functioning abilities develop as you get older but you can build and strengthen them any time, just like muscles.

What are Executive Functions?

Self-awareness

The ability to observe and think about your feelings and actions. You can't change behaviors if you are not able to monitor them and reflect on them.

Inhibition

The ability to put on the brakes and stop yourself from an action you might want to do but shouldn't do. Inhibition also helps keep you from getting distracted from your main goal.

Working Memory

The ability to hold things in your mind while doing something else. It's what helps you remember the steps in a routine or recall parts of a story when answering questions about it.

Emotional Self-Regulation

You use self-awareness, inhibition and working memory to stay calm when things are difficult or frustrating. Emotional self-regulation includes self-talk, which is the inner voice that helps you process and change how you feel about something.

Self-motivation

How well you can motivate yourself to complete a task when there is no immediate external reward.

Planning and Problem Solving

Planning includes having a sense of time and of your goals and figuring out how to meet your goals over time. Problem solving includes looking at situations in different ways, being open to new information, and trying something new if the first attempt doesn't work.

Pro Tips!



Write It Out! Write down a list of all of the goals that you want to accomplish, then place these goals in the order that you will complete them. Mark time and dates that you hope to work on them.

Jazz It Up! Playing a sport, acting in the theater, or completing strategy puzzles can help teach you these skills in a fun and engaging way. These skills apply outside of the classroom as well.



Break It Down! If you have a large task in front of you, try breaking it down into smaller steps that are easier to accomplish.

Take a Break - and Come Back! Use a timer to give yourself short breaks when you have a big task. Stretch, dance, or fidget for 3 minutes, and then jump back in.



Get Started! Starting a task may be the hardest thing. Procrastination is easy until the deadline pressure builds up. Experiment with strategies that help you get started.