

**Help for the Hopelessly
Unorganized Child:
Homeschooling Kids
With ADD or ADHD**





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Signs of ADD

INATTENTIVE

doesn't pay attention to details

makes careless mistakes

trouble staying focused; is easily distracted

difficulty remembering things and following directions

trouble staying organized, planning ahead, and

finishing projects

frequently loses or misplaces schoolwork, books, toys

or other items

Signs of ADHD

HYPERACTIVE

constantly fidgets and squirms

runs or climbs inappropriately

talks too much

difficulty playing quietly or relaxing

always on the go – as if driven by a motor

may have a quick temper

Understanding Executive Function

What is Executive Function?

- plan
- keep track of time
- organize
- remember things
- prioritize
- pay attention
- get started on tasks
- finish tasks on time

They also help people use information and experiences from the past to solve current problems.

The Development of Executive Function

Normally develops over time

Is affected by nature, or genetics, **and** nurture, the environment in which the individual lives

It **is** possible to improve Executive Function Skills

Skills Needed for Strong Executive Functioning

Working Memory: the ability to hold information in the mind and use it

Inhibitory Control: the ability to master thoughts and impulses so as to resist temptations and distractions and to pause and think before acting

Cognitive Flexibility: the capacity to switch gears and adjust to changing demands, priorities and perspectives

Poor Executive Function Skills Affect Ability To:

- Keep track of time
- Make plans
- Make sure work is finished on time
- Multitask
- Finds it hard to figure out how to get started on a task
- Can focus on small details or the overall picture, but not both at the same time
- Does things either quickly and messily or slowly and incompletely

Signs of Executive Function Weakness

- Has trouble paying attention and is easily distracted
- Loses a train of thought when interrupted
- Needs to be told the directions many times
- Has trouble making decisions
- Has a tough time switching gears from one activity to another

A Few Things Parents Need to Know

Kids with Executive Function weaknesses need external support until they have learned the skills

K.I.S.S

EF skills need to be explicitly taught and practiced until they become habit

Your kids want to be organized but often lack the ability to do so

Relationships first!!!

Organizational Styles

Visual Organizational Style:

- responds well to color and other visual cues
- uncomfortable with clutter
- needs to have all materials within sight
- remembers missing items in relationship to where they were last seen

Organizational Styles

Spatial Organizational Style:

- like movement, emotional, sensitive to feelings in self and others
- needs to clean off space before starting work
- needs to have all materials within reach
- remembers missing items in relationship to the place they were last used

Organizational Styles

Sequential Organizational Style:

- thinks in chronological order and sequence of steps
- work area has piles of papers
- gets upset when their piles are disturbed or changed
- thinks of missing items in relationship to the time they had it last

How Parents Can Help: Three Areas

Learning & Academics

Behavior & Emotions

Social Situations & Relationships

Executive Function and Learning

Organization, Planning & Prioritizing

Flexible Thinking

Working Memory

Self-Monitoring

Teaching Kids to Organizing Time

Family Calendar: Models

- General family schedule
- Record important commitments

Student Calendar: Teaches

- Kept by student
- Paper or electronic

**Organizing Projects:
An Example**

Break tasks into 'chunks'

Estimate how long each 'chunk' will take

Write these smaller tasks on calendar or planner

Model First: Teach kids how to make lists

**Organizing Tasks and Projects:
Teaching Time Management**

Planning: Make a list of steps needed to complete project

Prioritizing: Talk about most important things

Analyze 1st task: Break into steps
—

Estimate: How long does the child think it will take

Do and time task: How long did it actually take?

Record time & revise

Timed Task Sheets

Timed Task Sheet

Name _____

Task _____

Estimated Time: _____

Actual Time: _____

Difference: _____

Steps:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Tips For Effective List Making

Use images - even if your kids can read

Keep them short - up to 4 items

Post checklists where activity takes place

Include a photo of the completed task

Organizing Materials

A place for everything and everything in it's place.

Organize reference tools

Weekly clean up:
I do it / we do it / you do it

Brightly colored folders or storage bins

General Tips for Teaching Organization

Individualize for your unique child

Focus first on short-term strategies

Keep it simple

Work alongside your child

Lead by (honest) example

Focus on creating comfortable routines

Create a Command Center



Include:

- Calendar - dry erase
- Emergency contacts
- Chore lists
- Behavior charts
- Notes
- Keys

Create a Launch Pad



Include:

- Clock
- To-Do lists
- Charging station
- Back Packs
- Keys
- Sport Equipment
- Signed permission slips or other important papers
- Snacks
- Water bottles

Flexible Thinking Skills & How They Affect Learning

Reading Comprehension & Writing

- understanding major themes and supporting details

Math

- shifting between word meanings, procedures and operations

Science & History

- use context clues to prioritize and focus on the most relevant information

Foreign Language

- shifting between native and new language

Studying & Test taking

- going back and forth between topics and problem types

**How to Help Your Child Become
a More Flexible Thinker**

Playing games

Telling jokes, riddles and puns

Graphic organizers for writing

Talk it out for reading comprehension

Questioning and math

Working Memory

The ability to hold information in your mind and use it to complete a task.

Verbal (auditory) working memory

Visual (spatial) working memory

Identifying Working Memory Problems

- Trouble with multi-step directions
- Loses track during complicated tasks and may abandon activity before completing it
- Trouble paying attention (same part of brain)
- Raise their hands to answer questions but forget what they wanted to say
- Makes place keeping errors (skipping or repeating steps)

How to Help a Child With Poor Working Memory

Know your kids' weaknesses, but play to their strengths

Help compensate for a weakness

Help them be aware - ask questions

Discourage multi-tasking - encourage focus

Self-Monitoring

Self-monitoring is an executive skill that requires students to recognize:

- when and how to use specific strategies,
- check the effectiveness of these strategies
- adjust strategies in relation to the task at hand

Identifying Self-Monitoring Problems

Aren't aware of the approaches they're using to complete assignments

Don't recognize when they're "stuck" and need to shift to a different approach to complete work

Don't independently monitor and adjust the strategies they use

Don't know how to check or correct their errors independently

How Can You Help Your Child Learn to Self-Monitor

Reading Comprehension: SQ3R Method

- S**urvey
- Q**uestion
- R**ead
- R**ecite
- R**evue

Discussion After Reading
ask questions

How Can You Help Your Child Learn to Self-Monitor

Writing Strategies: COPS

- C**: Capitalization
- O**: Organization
- P**: Punctuation
- S**: Spelling

How Can You Help Your Child Learn to Self-Monitor

Math: Estimation

Homework Assignments

Studying & Test-Taking

How Executive Functions Affect Behavior & Emotions

Motivation

Tantrums or Meltdowns

Impulsivity

Helping Kids With Motivation

Pinpoint the problem:

Could it be:

- A lack of understanding
- Know **what**, but not **how** to do it
- They are overwhelmed

How to Help Your Child Feel Motivated

Simplify instructions

Make sure they are capable

Use a checklist

What are your child's perceptions of the task?

Use interests where possible

Offer choices where possible

Individualized rewards & consequences

The Incredible Power of Praise

Praising a child's **effort** rather than the outcome of their effort, has a profound affect on motivation - also called a **growth mindset**

Controlling Impulses and Emotions

Low threshold for frustration

Overreact to various situations

Excessive silliness

Trouble with transitions or variations in the routine

How You Can Help Your Child Control Behavior & Emotions

Set clear and consistent rules

Help kids understand the plan for each day

A healthy balance of rewards and consequences

Lots of role-playing and questioning

How Executive Function Affects Relationships

- Behaving in socially unacceptable ways
- Less able to solve interpersonal problems
- Less likely to consider the consequences of their behavior
- Less likely to understand nonverbal communication
- Less adaptable to new social situations
- Less able to tolerate frustration and failure

How to Help Your Child Develop Better Social Skills

Problem Solving & Discussion:

- Observe your child in social situations
 - Observe behavior issues; both positive and negative
- Begin a conversation with them

How to Help Your Child Develop Better Social Skills

- Role play social skills
- Teach proper behavior
- Look for younger friends
- Arrange one-on-one time with friends
- Look for teachable moments

How to Help Your Child Develop Better Social Skills

Focus on your own relationship

Look for their talents

Model good social skills

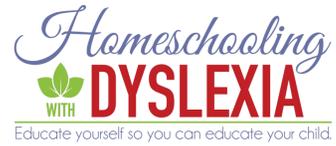
Handle teasing with humor

Don't push too hard

You can do this!

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