

Long Hill Ledger

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide parents with helpful parenting tips and useful resources.

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Executive Functioning

The executive functions are a set of processes that involve managing oneself and one's resources in order to achieve a goal. People with executive function difficulties may struggle with planning as well as organizing and managing time and space. It may also affect one's working memory abilities (or "seeing in your mind's eye"), which is an important tool in guiding one's actions. Below is a list of areas Executive Functioning may affect.



1. **Inhibition** - The ability to stop one's own behavior at the appropriate time, including stopping actions and thoughts. The flip side of inhibition is impulsivity; if you have weak ability to stop yourself from acting on your impulses, then you are "impulsive."
2. **Shift** - The ability to move freely from one situation to another and to think flexibly in order to respond appropriately to the situation.
3. **Emotional Control** - The ability to modulate emotional responses by bringing rational thought to bear on feelings.
4. **Initiation** - The ability to begin a task or activity and to independently generate ideas, responses, or problem-solving strategies.
5. **Working memory** - The capacity to hold information in mind for the purpose of completing a task.
6. **Planning/Organization** - The ability to manage current and future-oriented task demands.
7. **Organization of Materials** - The ability to impose order on work, play, and storage spaces.
8. **Self-Monitoring** - The ability to monitor one's own performance and to measure it against some standard of what is needed or expected.

Executive Function can affect learning in the following ways:

- making plans
- keeping track of time
- keeping track of more than one thing at once (multi-tasking)
- meaningfully including past knowledge in discussions
- engaging in group dynamics
- evaluating ideas
- reflecting on your work
- changing your minds and making mid-course and corrections while thinking, reading and writing
- finishing work on time
- asking for help
- waiting to speak until we're called on
- seeking more information when needed

Tips to help improve your child's

Executive Functioning:



- **Checklists** –Steps necessary for completing a task may not always be obvious. Therefore, defining them clearly ahead of time makes a task less daunting and more achievable. Checklists help kids focus their mental energy on the task at hand rather than trying to figure out what to do.
- **Set time limits** – When making a checklist, it may be helpful to assign a time limit for each step, particularly if it is a bigger, long-term project. Children can practice estimating time limits for each step until they get the hang of it.
- **Planners** –Recording homework and other assignments on paper helps to lighten the load on a student's working memory. In other words, if it's written down, students do not have to rely as much on memory and can devote that energy to classwork, studying, reading, etc.
- **Use rewards** – For younger students, external motivators such as a star chart helps them make the connection between practicing their skills and working towards a reward. Reward systems can be equally as effective for older children. The rewards should be age appropriate, and motivating for the child. It is also a great way to communicate to a child, that parents and teachers value skills such as homework completion.
- **Establish a routine** – It is recommended that students start homework at the same time every day, rather than waiting for inspiration to strike. This may be especially relevant to students who have difficulty initiating tasks.

8 Fun Games That Can Improve Your Child's

Executive Functioning Skills:

1. Max: a Cooperative Game
2. Jenga
3. Distraction
4. Mindtrap: The Game that Challenges the way you Think
5. AnimaLogic
6. Snake Oil
7. Quiddler: For the Fun of Words

Helpful Resources

Understood: For Learning and Attention Issues

www.understood.org

Three Brain-Based Teaching Strategies to Build Executive Function in Students (article)

<http://www.edutopia.org/blog/brain-based-teaching-strategies-judy-willis>

Executive Function

<http://www.childmind.org/en/executive-function/home/>

Beyond BookSmart Blog: Executive Functioning Strategies 5 Must-Have Apps for Improving Executive Functioning in Children

<http://www.beyondbooksmart.com/executive-functioning-strategies-blog/5-great-apps-for-improving-executive-functioning-in-children>

