



Executive Functioning

Helping your child to be organised at school.

Starter Activity

Write down 3 things that your child does well when it comes to organisation.

and

Write down 3 things that you think your child needs to improve when it comes to organisation.



- Understand what Executive Functioning is
- Understanding our children's organisational strengths and areas of need
- Take away strategies we can implement to support our children to be more organised



Definition:

A set of skills that enable us to plan, focus attention, remember instructions, and juggle multiple tasks successfully.

Executive Functioning



What is Executive Functioning?

Regulation of behaviours and emotions	Withdrawal, avoidance, aggression
Resist impulses	Procrastination
Self-esteem	Difficulty following instructions
Deal with change	Forgetful
Time management	Struggle to stay on task
Planning and prioritisation	Losing materials/resources
Make informed decisions	Miss deadlines
Growth mindset	Feeling overwhelmed

What Impacts Executive Functioning?

Consider what things your child has had to do during the school day - how might this impact their ability to perform EF related tasks?

- Plan
- Perform complex tasks
- Social interactions
- Prioritising
- School work from 6-8 subjects
- Time management
- Inhibition

Think about how you feel when you come out of a 3 hour movie - are you in position to perform some of these tasks?

Executive Skills Questionnaire.

Complete the questionnaire for your children - how much of a problem is each of the statements for your child? Use the scale provided to score each item.

At the end, identify your child's strengths and areas for improvement.


- A high score indicates a strength in that area
- A low score indicates a weakness in that area



Would you say that your child procrastinates?

Did you know that procrastination is often the body's way of trying to protect itself? This is heightened even more so for a teenager...

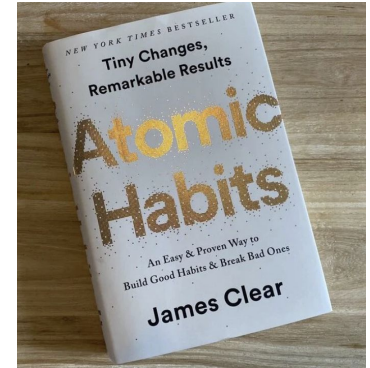
So, it's normal. They're not lazy. There's a Science behind it. How can you help them beat it?

Help them break it into smaller and more manageable tasks 
Encourage Habit Stacking!

The habit stacking formula is:

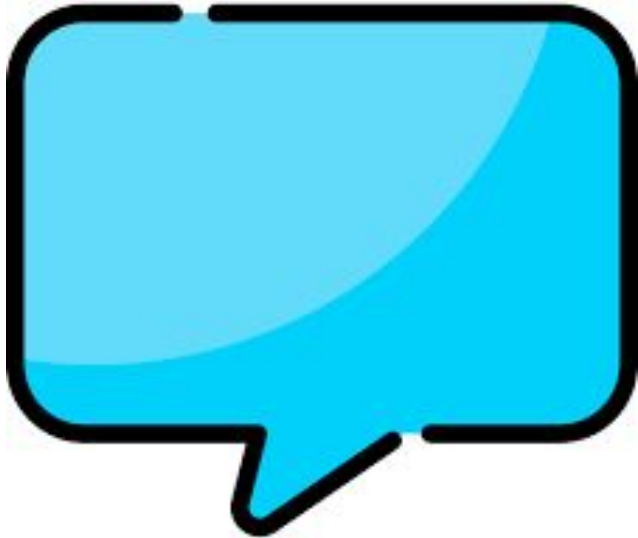
After/Before [CURRENT HABIT], **I will** [NEW HABIT]. For example:

- **After I** go on Tik Tok for 10 minutes when getting in from school, **I will** immediately check Mbac and start my homework.
- **After I** sit down to dinner, **I will** say one thing I'm grateful for that happened today.



Use the strategies on your groups table with examples of how you can help your child improve in particular areas based on your questionnaire.

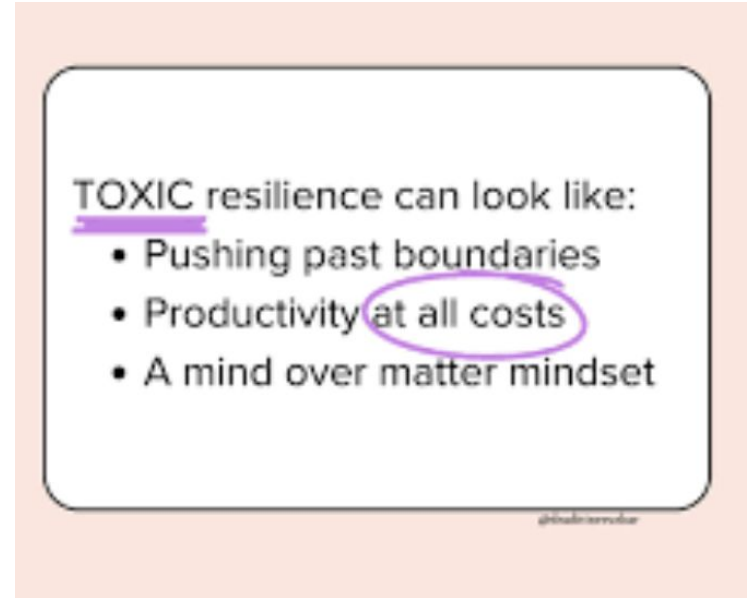
- Go to the first category where your child needs support according to the questionnaire
- With others on your table, discuss some of the strategies for that skill and what you think will work best for your child
- Repeat for the second category
- By the end, choose at least 2 things that you want to try with your child at home.



- What have you learned so far?
- Does anything surprise you?
- Are there any strategies that you are keen to try with your children?

Perseverance Vs 'Toxic' Resilience

1. Allowing your children to **fail and try again**
2. Encouraging **reflective conversations** when there are setbacks and **maybe suggesting steps** that can be taken to move forward
3. ***'Would you like me to offer a solution right now or would you like me to simply listen?'***
4. **Encouraging** your children to be in the **'moving forward driving seat' themselves**, when possible.



How to Create a Good Habit

Make it Obvious

- Use implementation intentions: *I will [behaviour] at [time] in [location]*.
 - I will check my Managebac calendar at my desk after I have eaten dinner.
- Use habit stacking: *after [current habit] I will [new habit]*
 - After brushing my teeth, I will check my Managebac calendar.
- Design the environment, make the cues for habits obvious and visible.
 - Make Managebac the homepage when they open their internet browser.
 - Use sticky notes around the bedroom / your home.

How to Create a Good Habit

Make it attractive:

- Use temptation bundling: pair an action you want to do with an item you need to do.
 - After you have spent 5 minutes on social media, check your Managebac calendar.
- Create a motivation ritual: do something you enjoy immediately before a habit.
 - After you have eaten your dinner, check your Managebac calendar.

How to Create a Good Habit

Make it easy:

- Use the two-minute rule: start with habits that can be achieved in two minutes or less.
 - Checking their Managebac calendar.
 - Writing a to-do-list for the next day.
- Prime the environment: prepare the environment to make future actions easier.
 - Have a paper calendar on their desk/fridge which they transfer information to so it always visible to them (and you!)

One evening my daughter wanted to build some lego. She also wanted to put a movie on in the background while she worked. I explained to her that it would be best to build her lego at the kitchen table to minimize the chance of losing any pieces.

She refused so I allowed her to make the choice. About 40 minutes into the build she dropped two pieces under the couch and when she went to push the table she was using out of the way to get up to get them the table toppled over and the lego she had built all fell to the floor and broke. She was angry and upset and looked at her parent.....

Parent 1	Parent 2	Parent 3
Tells her that the parent had told her to work at the table and if she had listened her piece wouldn't be broken.	Would pick it up, tell her it is no big deal and make it for her to help.	Would validate her feelings of frustration for the dropped pieces and needing to rebuild the lego but would not step in and offer to remake it for her.

Natural Vs Logical Consequences.

Parent 1	Parent 2	Parent 3
Tells her that the parent had told her to work at the table and if she had listened her piece wouldn't be broken.	Would pick it up, tell her it is no big deal and make it for her to help.	Would validate her feelings of frustration for the dropped pieces and needing to rebuild the lego but would not step in and offer to remake it for her.
This can damage a child's feeling of self worth and prevent them from figuring out the cause and effect for their choices. The natural consequence here is that the lego is now broken and the child will know this without us saying "I told you so"	As parents we need to step back and allow for the child to feel the inconvenience of starting again.	Validating that it is upsetting allows a child to lock in that feeling when they realise the natural consequences of their choices so that next time or in similar situations, they can make more informed choices.

Sometimes the learning and growth is in the struggle and sometimes in the failure.

CONSEQUENCES

natural and logical

Occurs without adult intervention

No explanation required but narration useful

Best if there is little delay between behavior & consequence

Adult imposed

Related to the offense

Must be explained to child

Best for behaviors that involve safety or other people

Scaffolding Executive Functioning Skills for Children

We Say	Instead
<p>Get your stuff ready for school tomorrow.</p>	<p>Please check your list to make sure you have everything ready for school tomorrow before you play outside/on your device/dinner time. Monday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lunch bag • Ipad • Charger • PE kit • Math homework
We Say	Instead
<p>You need to clean your room!</p>	<p>Before dinner is ready in 2 hours at (insert time) I need you to please go and do the following in your room:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make your bed • Put away clean clothes • Bring dirty clothes to the laundry • Take out any cups or water bottles and put them in the recycling or wash sink.

Remember:
It is really important that we then celebrate when they have achieved this and don't step in to do it for them if it is not the way we would do it as adults.

Aim to give one piece of feedback if needed to help improve the skills you are trying to build.

How Can We support Our Children?

- 1. Establish Predictable Routines** Consistent routines provide a structured environment that helps children learn to plan and organize their time. This could include regular schedules for meals, homework, playtime, and bedtime. Predictable routines can help children understand what is expected of them and when, which can enhance their ability to plan and manage time.
- 2. Show Them How to Use a Planner** Teaching children to use a planner can help them develop their planning and organization skills. This can start with simple tasks like marking important dates or listing homework assignments, and gradually include more complex tasks like planning for a project.
- 3. Help Them Create Checklists for Everyday Tasks** Checklists can be a practical tool to help children remember and complete tasks. This could include daily chores, homework assignments, or steps for a project. Checklists can help children visualize their tasks and track their progress, enhancing their planning and organization skills.
- 4. Set Time Limits** Setting time limits for tasks can help children learn to manage their time effectively. This could be used for homework, chores, or even playtime. Time limits can teach children to estimate how long a task will take and plan accordingly, enhancing their planning and time management skills.
- 5. Use a Reward System** A reward system can motivate children to practice their executive function skills. This could involve earning points for completing tasks, which can be exchanged for a reward. A reward system can make the practice of executive function skills more enjoyable and motivating for children.

Your children are much more likely to build good habits and practice executive functioning skills if they see you do it.

- Consider modelling the same strategies you would like your children to use.
 - Keep your own calendar and check it at the same time.
 - Talk to your children about the plans they have made tomorrow/the week.
- Create designated times and spaces in which you and your children perform these strategies.
- Discuss your own shortcomings in executive functioning and how you plan to overcome them.
- Be aware of barriers to executive functioning.



Please click [here](#) to find more tips from our Head of Inclusion