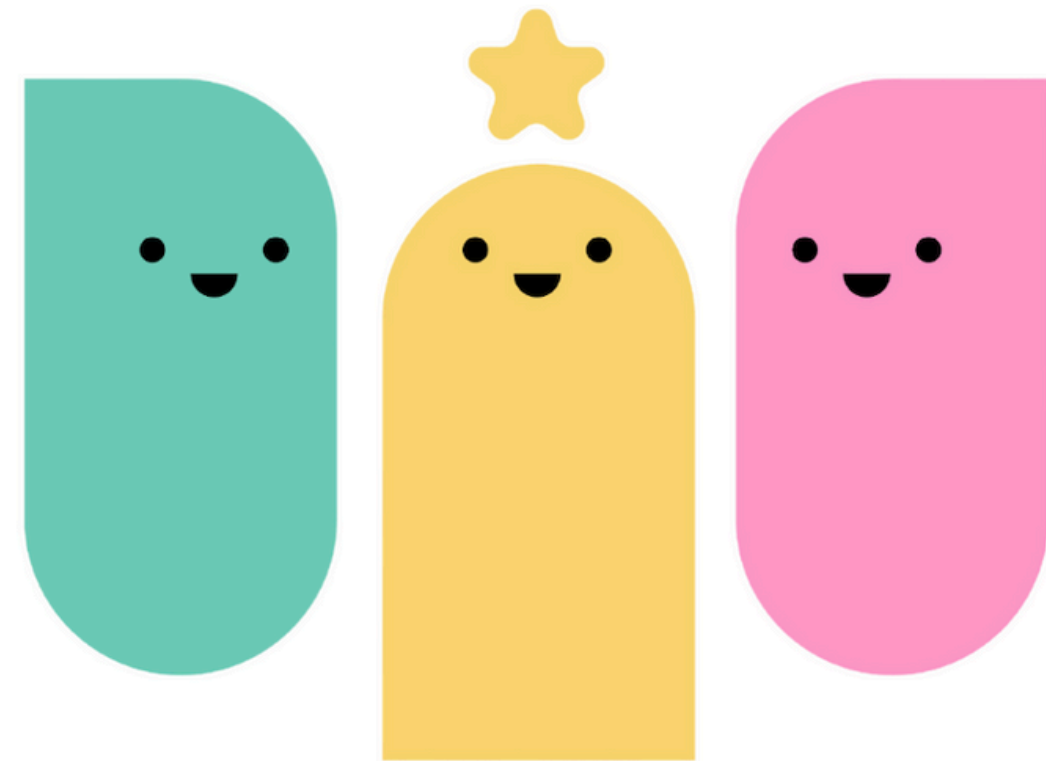


# executive functioning



***ALLISON HOPKINS ED.S., LPES, NCSP***



# CHARLESTON EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

**Psychoeducational Evaluations | Executive  
Functioning Coaching | Special Education  
Advocacy | Consulting & Support**



**Allie Hopkins Ed.S.  
Licensed Psycho-Educational Specialist  
Nationally Ceritifed School Psychologist**



THE CITADEL



# Goal for today

- Familiarize yourself with what executive skills are and how they impact learning
- Learn to apply EF terminology to a child's behavior and learning
- Apply an EF lens to problem solving tasks at home

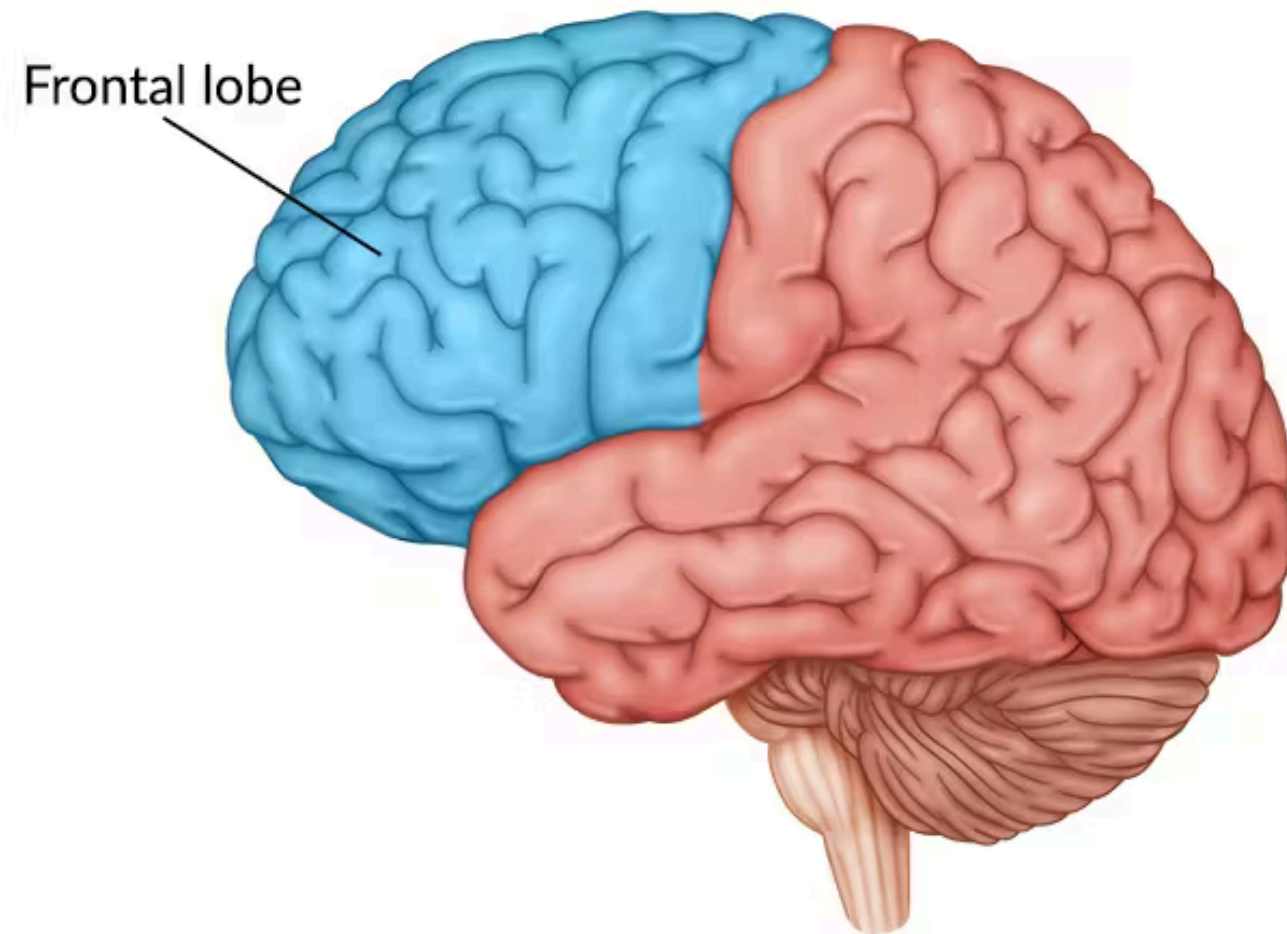
# **What are Executive Functioning Skills?**

## **EXECUTIVE SKILLS**

- Refer to the cognitive processes required to plan, organize, and execute activities

**In children with ADHD, Learning Disabilities, or neurodivergence they tend to develop more slowly than typically developing peers**

# Where do these skills come from?



**EMERGE  
OVER TIME?**

**LEARNED  
THROUGH  
PRACTICE?**

**MODELING &  
SHAPING?**

**EXPLICITLY  
TAUGHT?**

# Foundational skills

***"Hidden Curriculum"***  
**Necessary for School Success**

- Response Inhibition
- Working Memory
- Emotional Control
- Flexibility
- Sustained Attention
- Task Initiation



# Advanced Skills

- Planning/Prioritizing
- Organization
- Time Management
- Goal-Directed Persistence
- Metacognition



# Response Inhibition



The capacity to think before you act – this ability to resist the urge to say or do something allows us the time to evaluate a situation and how our behavior might impact it.

# Working Memory



The ability to hold information in memory while performing complex tasks. It incorporates the ability to draw on past learning or experience to apply to the situation at hand or to project into the future

# Emotional Regulation



The ability to manage emotions in order to achieve goals, complete tasks, or control and direct behavior.

# Flexibility



The ability to revise plans in the face of obstacles, setbacks, new information or mistakes. It relates to an adaptability to changing conditions.

# Sustained Attention



The capacity to maintain attention to a situation or task in spite of distractibility, fatigue, or boredom.

# Task Initiation



The ability to begin projects without undue procrastination, in an efficient or timely fashion.

# Planning/Prioritizing



The ability to create a roadmap to reach a goal or to complete a task. It also involves being able to make decisions about what's important to focus on and what's not important.

# Organization



The ability to create and maintain systems to keep track of information or materials.

# Time Management



The capacity to estimate how much time one has, how to allocate it, and how to stay within time limits and deadlines. It also involves a sense that time is important.

# Goal Directed Persistence



The capacity to have a goal, follow through to the completion of the goal and not be put off or distracted by competing interests.

# Metacognition



The ability to stand back and take a birds-eye view of oneself in a situation. It is an ability to observe how you problem solve. It also includes self-monitoring and self-evaluative skills (e.g., asking yourself, "How am I doing? or How did I do?").

# What does a weakness LOOK LIKE

- Acts without thinking
- Interrupts others
- Overreacts to small problems
- Upset by changes in plans
- Overwhelmed by large assignments
- Talks or plays too loudly
- Resists change of routine
- Doesn't notice impact of behavior on others
- Doesn't see their behavior as part of the issue
- Easily overstimulated and has trouble calming down
- Gets stuck on one topic or activity
- Gets overly upset about "little things"
- Out of control more than peers
- Can't come up with more than one way to solve a problem
- Low tolerance for frustration
- Acts wild or out of control

**Under Achievement  
is not a moral failing**

**Under Achievement  
is not a behavioral failing**

**What's developmentally  
appropriate helps guide  
supports we give kids**

---

# SKILL DEFICIT

# PERCEIVING BEHAVIOR

## STRESSFULL

## SKILL

**Lazy Unmotivated**

**Not Working To Potential**

**Disruptive**

**Oppositional**

**Task Initiation**

**Sustained Attention**

**Emotional Control**

**Emotional Regulation**

# PERCEIVING BEHAVIOR

## STRESSFULL

**Messy**

**Tardy**

**Forgetful**

**Absent Minded**

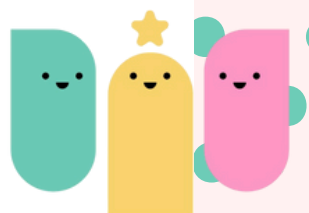
## SKILL

**Organization**

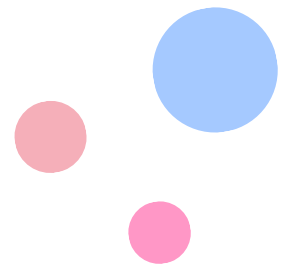
**Time Management**

**Working Memory**

**Goal Directed**



**How can we make our  
morning and evening  
routine less chaotic**



# **Primary ways adults can help...**

**Change the environment  
to reduce the impact of weak executive skills**

**Teach the child executive skill(s)**

**Use incentives to get children  
to use skills that are hard for them**

| Executive Skill Challenges | Problem Situations                                                          |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Response Inhibition        | 1. Having trouble doing homework when there are more fun things to do       |
| Emotional Control          | 2. Getting really irritated when a homework assignment is hard or confusing |
| Task Initiation            | 3. Relying on deadline as activator or motivator                            |
| Sustained Attention        | 4. Rushing through work just to get it done                                 |
| Working Memory             | 5. Internally and externally distracted                                     |

# environment

determining the when and  
where for homework

Visual Presentation  
Sensory Components  
Family Dynamics & Stress

## DECREASE FRICTION

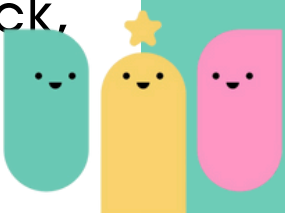
time & place | phone + devices

## DESIGNATED WORKSPACE

clear | visual timer | schedule/checklist  
lighting/sound | homework toolkit

## PRAISE + REWARD

specific positive verbal feedback | access  
Micro rewards – tokens, stickers, crock charms, snack,  
extra time, future choice





# TROUBLE GETTING STARTED?

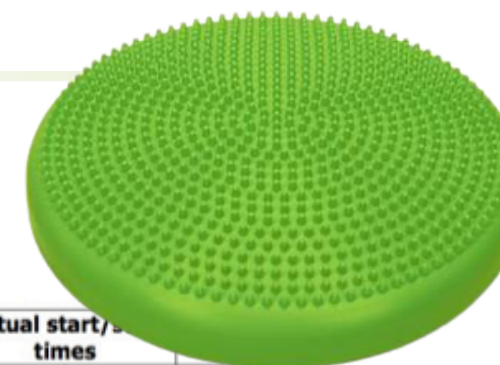
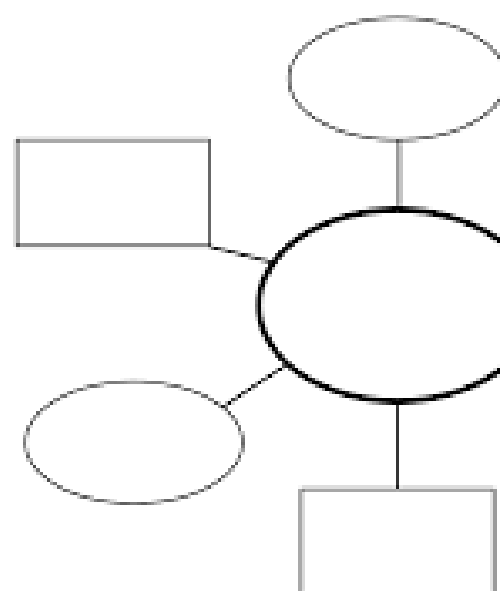
Is it?

|                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                |                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I'm not sure where to start<br> | I can't find my materials<br> | I'm distracted<br>           |
| I forgot the directions<br>     | I am not sure.<br>            | I need it to be perfect.<br> |
| I can't decide on a topic<br>   | I need a break<br>            | It is something else.<br>    |

# STUDY PLAN

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

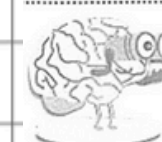
| Task | How long will it take? | When will you start? | Where will you work? | Actual start times |
|------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
|      |                        |                      |                      |                    |
|      |                        |                      |                      |                    |
|      |                        |                      |                      |                    |
|      |                        |                      |                      |                    |
|      |                        |                      |                      |                    |
|      |                        |                      |                      |                    |
|      |                        |                      |                      |                    |



# The ZONES of Regulation®

| BLUE ZONE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | GREEN ZONE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | YELLOW ZONE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | RED ZONE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
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From The Zones of Regulation® by Leah M. Kuyper • Available at www.socialthinking.com



# Brainstorm

Idea for a Goal

Listen to directions and math.

What would you need to do to reach this goal?

1, 2, 3's

talk to self

move away from distractions.

What help will you need?

B.S.T. Teacher.

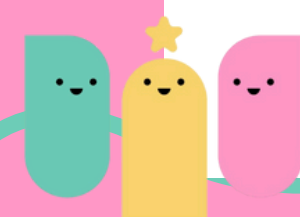
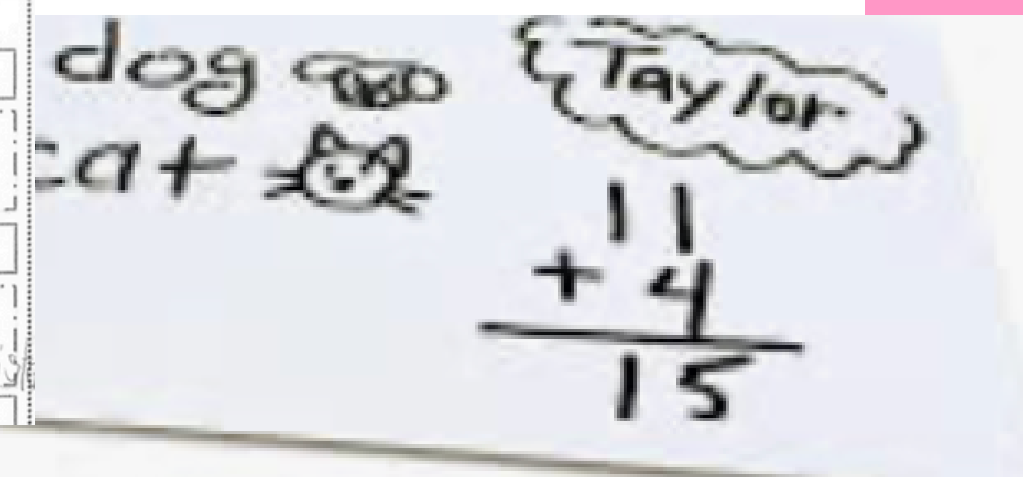
How long do you think it will take?

2 weeks

Why do you want to do this?

to have an answer  
to get better at his

NAME: Austin



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SERVICES

# Skill of choices

children experiment with limits in order to establish a sense of self

## skill benefits

focus attention to the task  
comply with wishes  
learn decision making skills  
feel empowered  
decreased power struggles  
redirect behavior and impulse control  
establish self-control

**two positive choices**

**what behaviors you  
want to see**

**two options acceptable  
to you**

You have a choice  
You can \_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_  
Feel free to \_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_  
What is your  
What is better for you  
You chose \_\_\_\_!

| Common Problem                             | Executive Skill Targeted         | Practical Strategies for Parents                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Child is slow to start the morning routine | Task Initiation<br>Planning      | Visual checklist<br>Fun alarm/playlist as nonverbal cue<br>First steps consistent                                                                      |
| Forgets materials or homework              | Organization<br>Working Memory   | Launch pad<br>Pack and check                                                                                                                           |
| Argues or Meltdown during transitions      | Emotional Control<br>Flexibility | 5, 2-minute warnings<br>Calm neutral language paired with visuals, avoid repeated directions – prompt hierarchy<br>Praise small moments of cooperation |
| Runs late or underestimates time           | Time Management<br>Planning      | Times for each step<br>Backwards planning as a family<br>Build in a 10 min. life happens cushion                                                       |

Evening routine drags or  
lead to conflict

Task Initiation  
Emotional Control

Bedtime routine chart  
Predictable consistent  
Calm & steady, avoid  
additional add ons or non-  
existent threats

Difficulty settling down  
for bed

Self-regulation

Power off screens hour  
before bed  
Dim lights, quiet/calm  
music  
Read together, simple  
calm game or activity

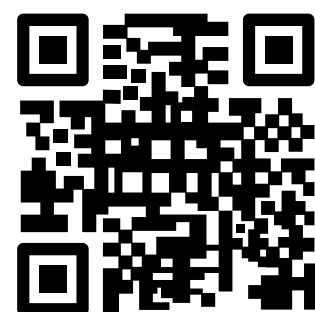
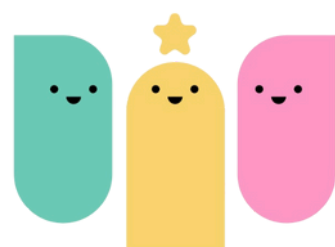
Morning/Evening feels  
like constant nagging

Metacognition →  
Independence

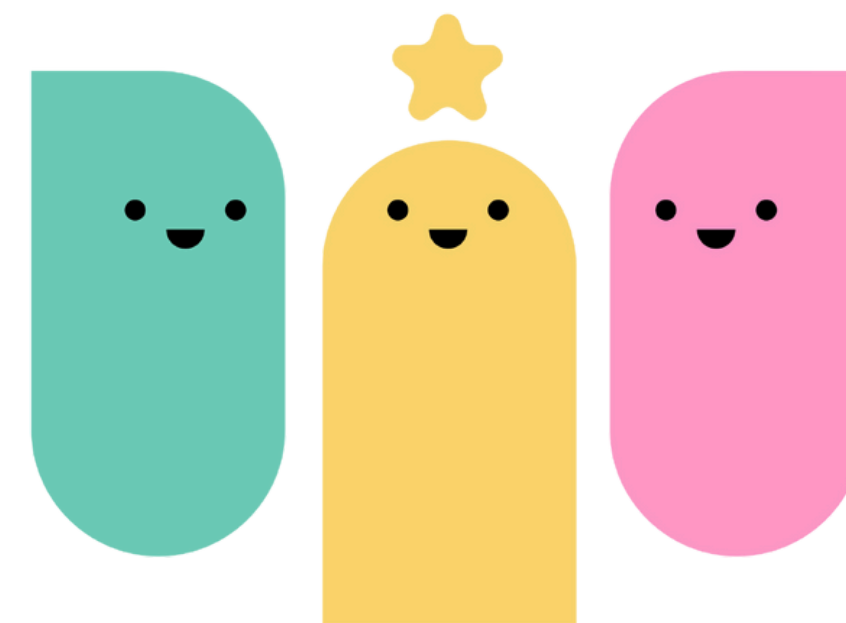
Charts/timers/alarms are  
boss and reminders  
Specific praise  
Gradually reduce/fade



# Instagram



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