

# EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING: MORE THAN JUST A NUMBER

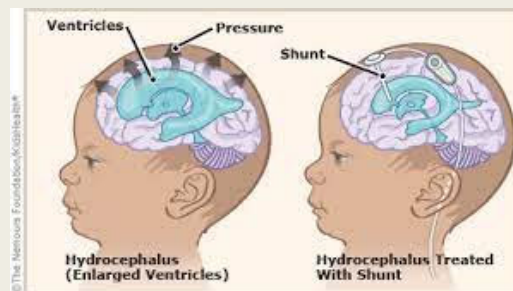
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## Agenda

- What is Executive Functioning
- What does it mean?
  - *Socialization*
  - *Academics*
  - *Day-to-Day (Adaptive Functioning)*
- What to do?
- Questions?

## Neuropsychological Profile for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus

- Challenges with visual reasoning
- **EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING**
- **ATTENTION**
- Visual Memory
- Fine/Gross Motor Functioning
- Emotional/Behavioral Differences
- Academics



## What is Executive Functioning?



## Common Diagnoses

ADHD

Autism Spectrum Disorder

Anxiety

Depression

Neurodevelopmental disorders


Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

Learning Difficulties


Adverse Experiences


## The Secretary of the Brain





 Taking calls

 Labeling/Organizing Files

 Staying calm

 Taking notes

 Prioritizing Tasks

 Scheduling



# SOCIALIZATION

## Socialization

Skill	Application
Attention	Listen to conversations; Attend to social cues
Impulse Control	Interruptions; Comments that are out of context
Cognitive Rigidity	Perspective Taking; Non-literal language
Verbal Fluency/Processing Speed	Quickly processing conversation
Organization/Attention	Following one's own thoughts



# ACADEMICS

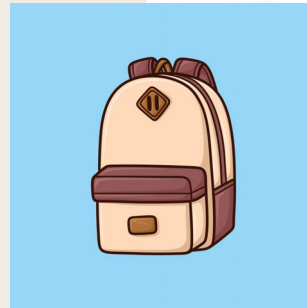
## Academics

Skill	Application
Attention	Listening to instructions
Initiation	Starting academic tasks
Cognitive Rigidity	Perspective taking; Inferences; Reading comprehension
Shifting	Going from notes to instructor to notes
Organization/Attention	Prioritizing tasks/Assignments

DAY TO DAY

## Tasks of Daily Living

- **Showering**
- Brushing Teeth
- Putting Deodorant on
- Asking for Items that are out
- Getting ready for school
- Cathing
- Taking Medication



## Showering

1. Prepare Your Shower Space
2. Turn on the Water
3. Wet Your Body
4. Shampoo Your Hair
5. Condition Your Hair
6. Wash Your Body
7. Rinse Off
8. Turn Off the Water
9. Dry Off



# EMOTIONS

## Regulating your Emotions

1. Recognize Your Emotions
2. Acknowledge the Emotion Without Judgment
3. Pause and Breathe
4. Identify the Cause of the Emotion
5. Reframe the Situation
6. Self-Talk
7. Use Grounding Techniques
8. Seek Support
9. Practice Self-Compassion
10. Reflect After the Situation





# WHAT DO WE DO?!

## Important Considerations

- Each person is different
- Model Kindness
- Start with more support and slowly teach them
- **ADVOCACY SKILLS**



## What to do to help?

- **Use Visual Schedules**
  - Individuals can follow along with a clear structure, which helps them stay on track and reduces anxiety about what's next. Use pictures for younger kids and written words for older ones.
  - *Helpful for cognitive rigidity, planning, initiation*
- **Break Tasks Into Smaller Steps**
  - This makes tasks less overwhelming and gives kids a sense of accomplishment with each step. It also helps them focus on one thing at a time.
  - *Help with prioritize, initiation, attention, easily becoming fatigued*
- **Use Timers and Alarms**
  - Timers create a sense of urgency and can help kids focus, as they know they need to finish the task before the timer goes off. I
  - *Time management, transitions*
- **Use Visual Reminders:** Post visual cues, like sticky notes or charts, to remind kids of important steps or routines.
- **Use a "First-Then" Strategy**
  - Use simple "first-then" statements to motivate behavior (e.g., "First finish your homework, then you can play outside").
  - *Prioritizing things, understanding the consequences*
- **Chunk Information**

## What to do to help?

- **Encourage Breaks**
  - *Schedule regular short breaks between tasks (e.g., a 5-minute break after 15 minutes of work).*
  - *Breaks help kids recharge, reducing mental fatigue and improving focus when they return to tasks.*
- **Teach Organization Skills:** Guide kids on how to organize their school materials, belongings, and workspace.
- **Teach Impulse Control Strategies**
  - *Practice strategies like "stop, think, act" to help kids control impulsive behaviors.*
- **Model and Practice Social Skills**
  - *Teach and role-play social scenarios to practice appropriate responses, greetings, and listening.*

## What to do to help?

- **Use Fidget Tools**

- Offer stress-relief toys or fidget tools for kids to use while working or in class.
- *Help with focus, regulation, body recognition, body awareness*

- **Practice Mindfulness and Deep Breathing**

- Teach deep breathing exercises, mindfulness activities, or short meditation breaks.
- *Self-regulation, calming*

- **Use Color-Coding**

- easier for kids to stay organized and quickly find the materials they need, promoting better task management and planning.



QUESTIONS?