

Executive Functioning: Tips for Distance Learning

Like many adults, children are now navigating the world of distance learning. This requires time management, attention and self-regulation (all Executive Functioning skills). What is Executive Functioning? Executive Functioning (EF) is the control center of our brain. Think of EF as the CEO or boss of your brain. EF helps you plan, organize, initiate, and self-monitor. These skills continuously develop as children grow into adults. Some children need help to figure out which Executive Functioning strategy to use and when to use it, especially during this new distance learning experience. Here are **three** strategies that can help.

Clocks

- ✓ Some children have trouble managing time & understanding how time works
- ✓ They operate on a "now" or "not now" schedule
- 💡 Strategy: Take an analog clock and use a marker or post-it to visually show your child how much time they have to accomplish a certain task



Goals

- ✓ Setting goals and staying on track can be difficult, especially now that routines are suddenly different
- 💡 Strategy: Help your child figure out what needs to be accomplished. Older children can make their own list. Have your child pick TWO to THREE things to prioritize for the day
- 💡 Once your child feels successful in completing two to three tasks, increase it. Older children can also estimate how much time each task will take. This helps build awareness of time and helps with planning tasks in the future



Music

- ✓ Music increases dopamine in the brain, which is responsible for many things such as motivation, memory, and attention
- ✓ Some kids concentrate better with music, others don't
- 💡 Strategy: Experiment and see what works for your child. Many forms of music can be helpful, not just classical music



Most importantly, remember that the transition to distance learning is new and challenging for many children. It will likely not look like a "typical" school day. Encourage your child to practice these strategies, and praise small steps towards improvement. Compassion, patience, and reassurance are equally as important as productivity during this time.