



Tips for Supporting Students with Executive Functioning Deficits:

School settings can be especially challenging for students with Executive Functioning deficits. Executive Functioning skills are in high demand in the typical classroom, and some of the first to develop in children include:



Sustained Attention/Self-Awareness

- Reflexive Questioning can be very effective for increasing a child's awareness of their own attention
- Example: "What are your thoughts on right now? What are your thoughts supposed to be on?" → give LOTS of verbal praise if a child correctly identifies what is distracting them and can redirect themselves
- For the younger child, a more direct cue can be used, such as "put your thoughts on my words"



Nonverbal Working Memory

- This skill allows us to "visualize" things in our brain
- Deficits in nonverbal working memory can lead to poor reading/listening comprehension or difficulty envisioning possible consequences of our actions
- Use language to bring awareness to the student's mental imagery
- Examples: "What do you see yourself doing next?" or when reading, question to mental imagery, "What color do you picture the dog?"



Verbal Working Memory

- This skill allows us to "hold on" to sounds and speech in the brain
- Deficits in verbal working memory can lead to deficits in decoding and spelling, following directions, and reading/listening comprehension
- Write it down! A written "plan" can help a student stay on track when our words seem to go in one ear and out the other! You can use pictures/symbols with written words for emerging readers.
- Example: "Johnny's Circle Time Plan"
 - Keep your body at the circle
 - Keep your thoughts on the teacher's words