

Teaching Teachers to Manage ADHD/Executive Function in Their Classroom

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- Creator: **Calm and Connected: Parenting Children & Teens with ADHD/Executive Function Challenges** Parent Coaching Workshop
- Author:
 - **8 Keys to Parenting Children with ADHD**
 - **ADHD, Executive Function, & Behavioral Challenges in the Classroom: Managing the Impact on Learning, Motivation, & Stress**
- Professional Development for Educators and related specialties
- ADHD Parent Coach Trainer
- Speaker, Writer, Advocate and Avid Learner



Overview

1. Understanding the current knowledge level among general education teachers about ADHD.
2. Key insights every educator should possess when working with students affected by ADHD.
3. Empowering general educators to handle challenging behaviors in students with ADHD more effectively.
4. Support learning for all students by teaching them how to build their Executive Function skills.
5. Spend less time managing off-task behaviors and more time teaching curriculum.

What do you know about ADHD?

- Most educators have received no formal training for teaching students with ADHD and its comorbid conditions.
- More than four in five educators said they learned about neurodivergent learners from co-workers, students' parents, and the students themselves.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, **9.8% of school-age children have been diagnosed with ADHD**. Most of these children are educated in the general education classroom, regardless of whether they receive additional support via an IEP or 504 Plan.

This means that virtually every classroom has at least one student with ADHD.

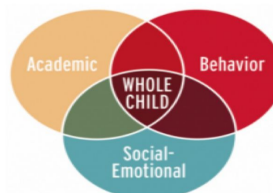
When educators lack an understanding of ADHD's executive dysfunctions, self-regulation struggles, and dopamine deficits, students are more likely to hear these refrains:

- "You're not trying hard enough."
- "You have so much potential;
if only you would apply yourself."
- "You need to learn to control yourself."

These unhelpful comments and harsh punishments tear down a child's self-esteem while offering no strategies for improvement; they are counterproductive at best and cruel at worst.

MTSS (Multi-Tier System of Supports)

addresses academic as well as social and emotional areas, including behavior and other non-academic topics.



It is important to see how behavior may impact, as well as be impacted by, learning skills, environments, and opportunities.

What are some of the challenges you face...

- In supporting students who have ADHD?
- In working with parents to best support their child
- In supporting general educators or related staff who work with students who have ADHD?

What do you wish you, and everyone else, knew about ADHD?

What is ADHD?

- Characterized by developmentally inappropriate levels of attention, impulsivity, and in some cases hyperactivity
- Several noticeable inattentive or hyperactive-impulsive symptoms evident in two or more settings present prior to age 12
- There must be clear evidence that the symptoms interfere with, or reduce the quality of social, academic, or occupational functioning
- Approximately 9.8% of children 2-17 years of age had ever been diagnosed with ADHD, according to parent reports (CDC, 2019) The rate for boys is higher than that of girls
- Largely hereditary: 40% of children with ADHD have at least one parent who has ADHD and 30% have a sibling with ADHD
- Chronic disorder: 75% continue to have symptoms into adulthood (Brown, 2013)

ADHD is REAL!

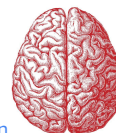
Imaging studies show differences in the *structure and activity* between the brains of people with and without ADHD.



- The loading and releasing of the neurotransmitters Dopamine, Norepinephrine, and Serotonin in the brain's prefrontal cortex is inconsistent for people with ADHD. These neurotransmitters contribute to maintaining alertness, increasing focus, and sustaining thought, effort, and motivation.
- The prefrontal cortex is thinner & matures more slowly.
- Under-stimulation in the reward and motivation centers in the brain.

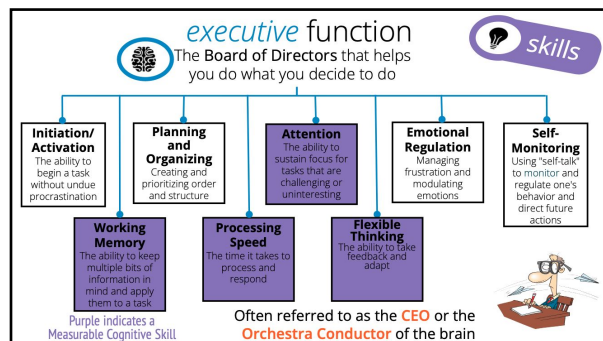
What is Executive Function?

- The set of mental skills or processes that allow us to use our intelligence and problem-solving abilities to help us work toward achieving our goals
- Located in the prefrontal cortex of the brain
- Last part of the brain to develop
- Typically fully developed by 25 - 30 years of age



Let's teach ALL students what Executive Function is!

- Empower **every** student to understand the factors influencing their learning, emotions, and behavior, enabling them to assume greater control and responsibility for their actions.
- Diminish feelings of shame associated with perceived inadequacy or weakness, and instead, motivate them to acquire tools and strategies for effectively managing each Executive Function.

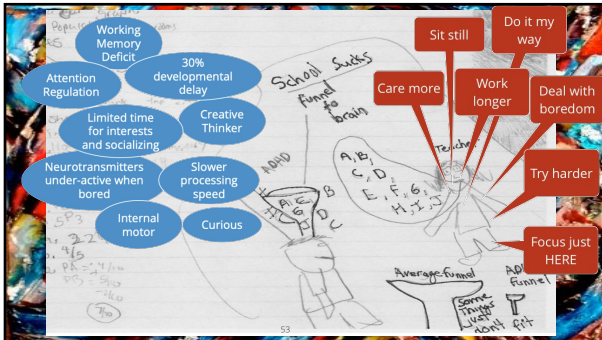


Let's help kids move **APPROPRIATELY**

Fidget	Toy
Secondary Focus: When a fidget is being used appropriately, it should remain a secondary focus. This means that it should stay in the background of your attention.	Primary Focus: A fidget becomes a toy when it is the primary focus of attention rather than what is being taught.
Eyes on Learning: Eyes should remain on the source of learning when fidgets are used correctly. Whether you are completing an independent task or paying attention to the teacher, your focus needs to be on learning.	Eyes on Fidget: When eyes are on the fidget instead of the source of learning, it is no longer being used as a fidget. The fidget has now become the primary focus, and attention to the task is lost.
Mindlessly Used: When used properly, a fidget is used mindlessly to the point where it becomes part of a system.	Actively Used: When the fidget is actively used, you are investigating how it works, trying to build with it, or trying to create something with it. If a fidget is being actively used, it has now become a toy.

Pg. 5, [ADHD, Executive Function & Behavioral Challenges in the Classroom](#) by Cindy Goldrich & Carly Wolf, Copyright ©2019

What makes some Students so challenging to teach in school?



The Conventional View of Student Behavior

"Kids do well if they want to"

- Defiant behavior is used to gain attention, manipulate, and coerce others into giving in to their wishes
- Students want **POWER** and **CONTROL** over their lives...
And are willing to fight for it!
- Students are not always intrinsically motivated to do what they must to cooperate and succeed

Rewards and Consequences improve the "want to"

Challenging behaviors

Such as: refusal, whining, crying, yelling, lying, sulking, ignoring, avoiding, etc.
are **manipulative responses**
maladaptive

Challenging behaviors occur when the demands or expectations exceed one's capacity to respond adaptively or appropriately in the moment.

We see the behavior - not the story!



Kids do well if they want to



- Kids want to feel independent, competent, connected, and loved... and they sometimes lack the skills they need in the moment!
- As with a learning disability, a student's challenging behavior is not intentional, goal-oriented, manipulative, or attention-seeking.

"Kids do well if they can"

Ross Greene

*Grownups too...

In the same way that Students with Learning Disabilities struggle with Thinking Skills in areas related to Reading, Writing or Math...

Research has shown that *Behaviorally Challenging Students* struggle with *Thinking Skills* related to:

**Flexibility, Adaptability, Frustration
Tolerance and Problem Solving.**

Shift your focus

What is your goal?
What is most important?

Is it Compliance... Or Skill Building?

Don't focus just on the behavior -

- What was the trigger?
- What is the story behind the behavior?
- What skill is lagging?

About the parents...

It's often more complex that it appears...

- Is it their first child? Is the other child exceptional - on one end or the other...
- What may be going at home - with siblings, parents, economic concerns, health concerns?
- ADHD is highly heritable. And many adults are still undiagnosed.
- Cultural differences
- Parents may disagree with one another about how to parent their child.

Providing students with ADHD with essential knowledge, tools, and strategies not only fosters success in academic, home, and social spheres but also lays the groundwork for lifelong achievement.

When teachers know how to manage ADHD and build students' Executive Function skills, they can spend

- less time managing challenging and off-task behaviors
- more time teaching curriculum and overall academic skills.

The Main Takeaway..

General Education teachers, speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists, guidance counselors, and all school staff must understand the Social and emotional impact that ADHD and executive function challenges have on learning, motivation, behavior, and the whole family system.

This is not just a Special Education concern!

Let's get everyone the full training about ADHD and Executive Function development they need and deserve to help all kids thrive!

Please complete this short assessment

The Knowledge of Attention Deficit Disorders Scale (KADDS) is one of the most widely used instruments to assess the level of ADHD knowledge among teachers. You will receive your score after completing the assessments. Your score will not be shared with anyone. However, it will give you a sense of your personal knowledge.

<https://bit.ly/PTSpstKADDS>

Thank you for joining me!

- If you know any parents who need help supporting and managing their children who have ADHD:
<https://bit.ly/CalmConnectedPTS>
- Visit www.PTScoaching.com for more resources
- Become an **ADHD Specialist** and train teachers and related professionals: <https://bit.ly/ADHDTeacherTrainer>
- Support Parents - Become a professional **ADHD Parent Coach**:
<https://bit.ly/BeAParentCoach>
- PTS Coaching Newsletter: <https://bit.ly/newsletterPTS>

If you have any questions or if I can support you further, email: Cindy@PTScoaching.com