

SAP NEWSLETTER

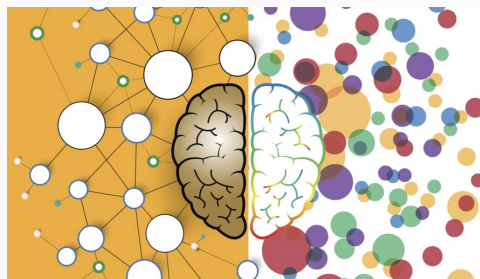
Issue 3 - Maintaining Kids' Focus

Helping Your Child Stay Focused

Whether your child is remaining in a remote learning environment or moving to the hybrid setting, keeping them engaged and focused in school will be difficult, especially for kids who may suffer from learning or attention issues, such as ADHD.

In order for your kids to make the most of remote/hybrid learning and bolster their executive functioning skills, you should focus on these three things, according to [Attitude Magazine](#)

- **Practice mindfulness** - Mindfulness helps build self regulation skills and promotes focus. Have children focus on different sensations, practice breathing exercises, or use meditation apps.
- **Engineer your environment** - The physical environment where your child is learning plays a crucial role in maintaining their focus. Create structure, including sleeping and meal schedules, time for exercise, set up a learning space for your child and utilize reminders for assignments.
- **Ask questions** - Rather than commanding or directing children to complete tasks, ask them guided questions to trigger proactive thinking and working through problems independently. **Instead of saying "stop doing that" you can say "when you're finished with that, it's time for homework."**



Regardless of the learning environment you and your child(ren) choose, you will likely face many challenges. It's important to be aware of some of these challenges, including:

- Your child's ability to follow social distancing guidelines when returning to school
- Their ability to switch between two learning environments in a hybrid setting
- Staying focused if remaining in a remote setting

Consider these challenges when determining what is best for your child(ren) and discuss with them how to best overcome these challenges and meet your child's learning needs.

For more resources about remote/hybrid learning and keep kids' focused, visit these websites:

- [How Parents Can Help Children With Attention and Learning Issues With Remote, Hybrid, or In-Person Learning](#)
- [Help parents and caregivers keep kids focused, interested, and balanced while learning from home](#)
- [Tools to Help Kids Stay Focused During Distance Learning](#)
- [What Is ADHD?](#)

Setting (and Keeping) Goals During Uncertain Times

Setting, keeping and achieving goals is an important skill needed to succeed in life and it's important to develop these skills from an early age. Having goals, and something to strive towards, is important for our overall wellbeing, happiness, and teaches kids to take responsibility for their behaviors. However, given current circumstances, your kids may be finding it difficult to make goals and plan for the future.



So how do we help our kids plan for the future when we ourselves may be struggling with this? Below are some tips and steps to help younger kids and adolescents set and achieve goals:

Younger Kids

- Let them choose their big goal - Children are more likely to be successful in reaching their goal if it's something they genuinely desire
- Talk about the purpose of their goal - Help your child understand WHY their goal is important
- Break their big goal into smaller steps - Breaking up a big goal into smaller, short term goals makes it more manageable and easier to achieve
- Brainstorm potential obstacles - Children may lose their motivation to pursue their goal if they come across challenges

WOOP Four-Step Technique

Wish _____

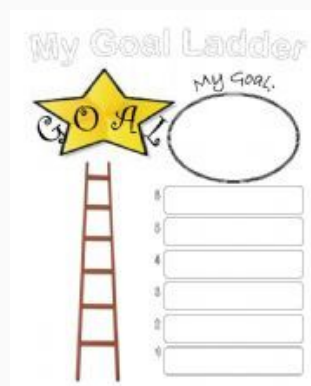
Outcome _____

Obstacle _____

Plan _____

If _____ obstacle then I will _____ action to overcome obstacle

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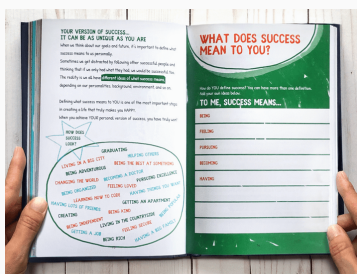


HOW TO CREATE A Vision Board

- ★ Cut out pictures of hopes and dreams
- ★ Paste onto poster board, decorate
- ★ Put your vision board somewhere you can see it

Adolescents

- Make sure it's their goal, not yours - Teens may reject a goal that they feel is being forced upon them. Allowing them to choose their own goal fosters their autonomy and independence
- Support their interests - Be supportive and take interest in what they're interested in, as long as it is safe and reasonable
- Demonstrate they're in control - Help your teen see what they've specifically done towards achieving their goal
- Make sure goals are specific and measurable - Help your teen create goals that are specific and able to be measured ("I want to apply to three colleges by next month")



For more information and tips visit these websites:

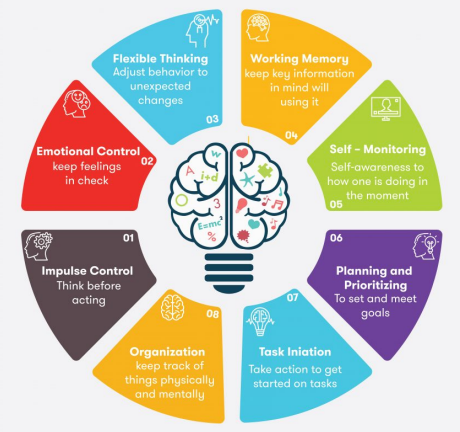
- [7 Fun Goal Setting Activities for Children](#)
- [How to Help Teens Set Effective Goals](#)
- [4 Steps for Helping Your Child Set Effective Goals](#)
- [A Beginner's Guide to Goal Setting in Teens](#)
- [Goal Setting for Teens](#)

Executive Functioning...What Does it Mean?

Executive functions are a set of skills that help us plan, set goals, focus our attention and complete tasks. We use these skills everyday to learn, work and manage our daily lives. The three main areas of executive function include:

- **Working memory** - Governs our ability to retain information over a short period of time
- **Flexible thinking** - Helps us shift attention in response to different demands
- **Self control** - Enables us to set priorities and resist impulsive reactions

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING



Executive functions are responsible for skills that include:

- Paying attention
- Regulating emotions
- Self monitoring
- Understanding different point of views
- Organizing, planning and prioritizing
- Starting tasks and staying focused

These skills start developing in early childhood and continue to develop well into the teens and early 20's. Trouble with executive functioning can affect people in different ways and some of the difficulties may resemble signs of ADHD.

If your child struggles with starting, completing, or prioritizing tasks, has trouble following directions or with switching between tasks they may be struggling with their executive skills. Here are some tips from [The Child Mind Institute](#) for helping kids who struggle with executive functions:

- Make check lists
- Set time limits
- Use a planner
- Spell out the rationale

For more resources on executive functioning, visit these websites

- [15 Ways to Teach Executive Functioning Skills](#)
- [Executive Functioning Strategies for Your Child](#)
- [Teens and Executive Function Skills](#)
- [Best Apps and Sites for Improving Executive Function](#)

STRATEGIES FOR STAYING ORGANIZED	
	Use computers, alarms, organizers, and similar tools Request written directions with oral instructions Create a visual schedule and review it throughout the day Structure your time and the shifts between activities
STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING TIME	
	Create checklists with time estimates for each task Use visual aids to track long-term assignments and activities Write the due date at the top of your assignments Divide big assignments into sections with timeframes
STRATEGIES FOR MAINTAINING YOUR WORKSPACE	
	Remove clutter from the area Develop a system for organization Create separate work areas for different activities Clean and organize your workspace once per week
STRATEGIES FOR COMPLETING ASSIGNMENTS	
	Make a step-by-step checklist for finishing an assignment Meet with the teacher regularly to ask questions and review work Limit interruptions and prevent distractions Establish and stick to a daily routine

10 GAMES TO IMPROVE EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS	
1	BLURT (self-control, metacognition)
2	SCRABBLE (planning, organization)
3	PICTIONARY (flexibility, time management)
4	DISTRACTION (working memory, attention)
5	5 SECOND RULE (time management, task initiation)
6	FREEZE (self-control, attention)
7	JENGA (self-control, flexibility, planning)
8	BRAINTEASERS (perseverance, flexibility)
9	CHESS (planning, flexibility, working memory)
10	SODUKU (perseverance, working memory)



Hatboro Horsham Student Assistance Program

Dawn Tucker, Hatboro Horsham SAP Coordinator
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Hatboro Horsham's Student Assistance Program (SAP) is a team of trained individuals that can provide support for students experiencing academic, behavioral and/or emotional difficulties that may pose a barrier for school success. Our SAP team members will be able to offer virtual supports as determined by the team. These services include group and individual support, peer mediation, and help connecting families to community resources.

Hatboro Horsham School District partners with Merakey, a **behavioral health agency**, to contract counselors out at the elementary, middle and high school level. For more information about SAP services you can contact Dawn Tucker, dtucker@hhsd.org. **For specific concerns or questions about your child, please reach out to your child's school counselor.**