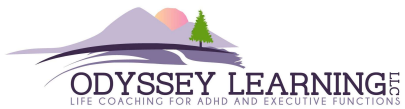


# Engaging Their Brains and Using Their Strengths

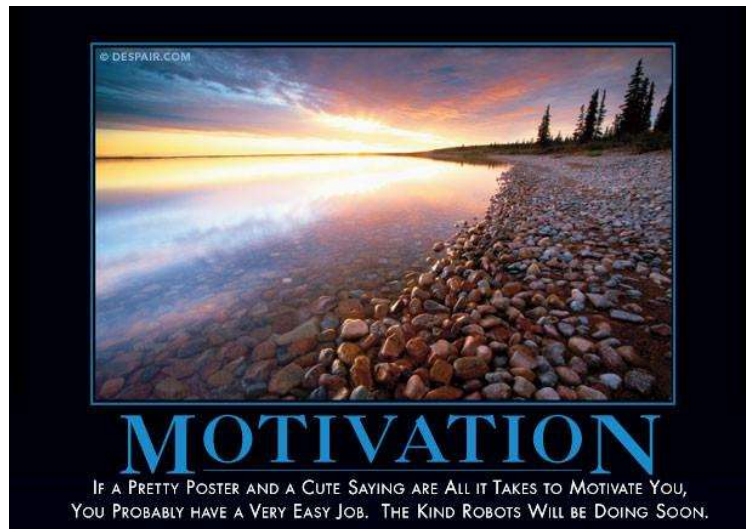
## Executive Function Skills and Gifted Kids

Blue Valley Parent Advocates for Gifted Education  
November 15, 2018



Diane McLean, M.Ed., PCC  
Odyssey Learning LLC  
*Certified Coach for  
ADHD and Executive Functions*  
[www.execskills.com](http://www.execskills.com)

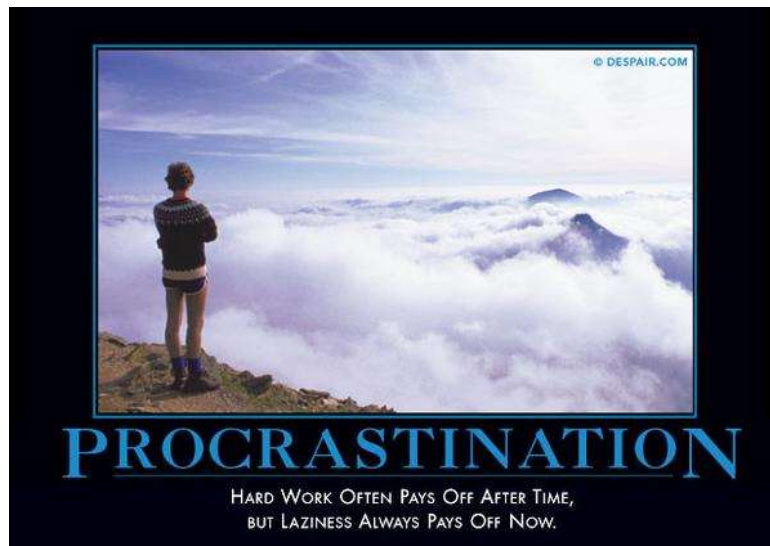
### Motivation...



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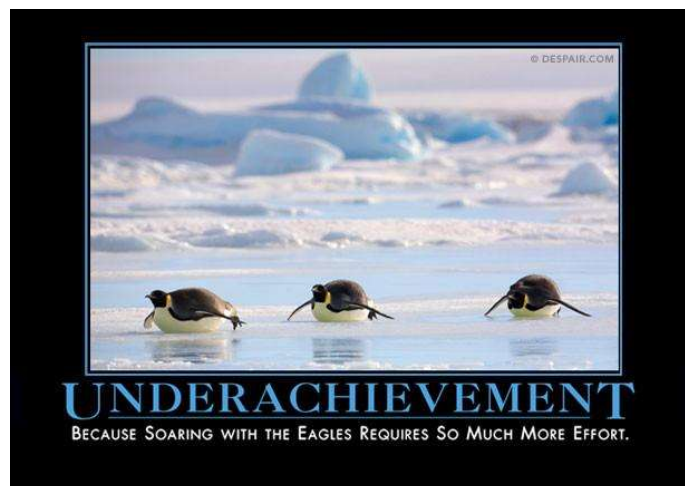
## Procrastination...



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## Underachievement...



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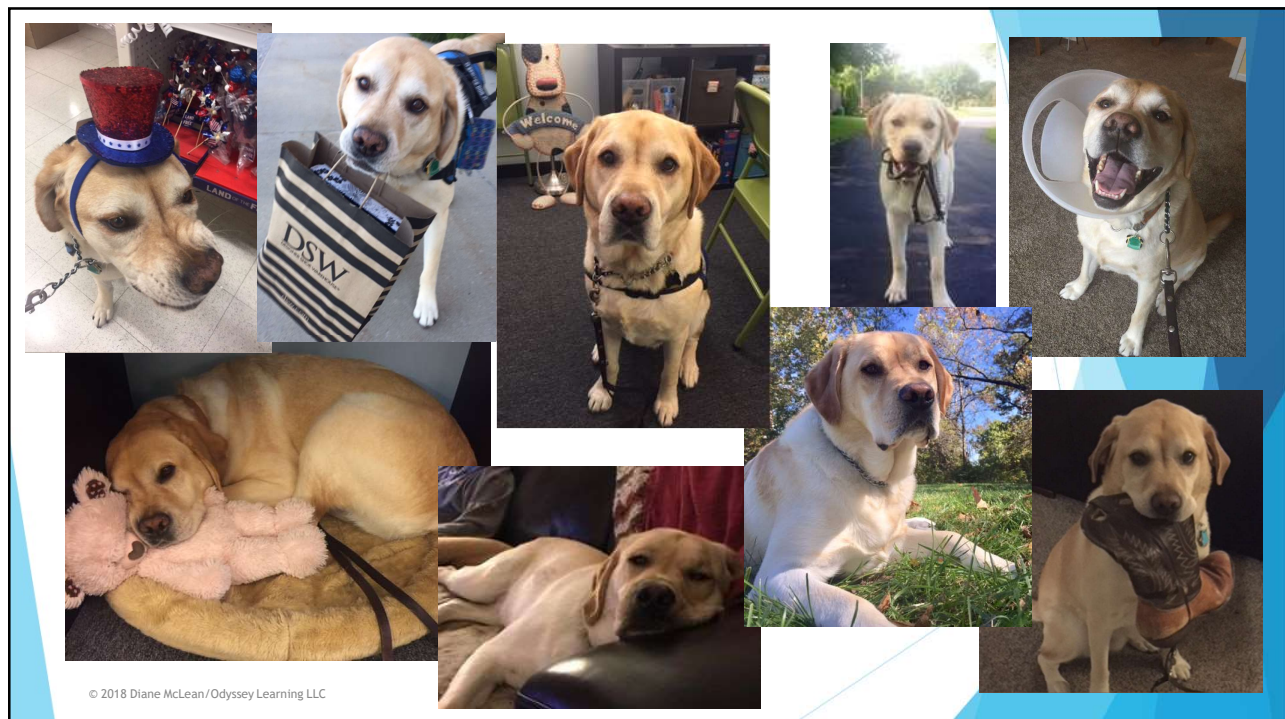
Despair, Inc., [www.despair.com](http://www.despair.com)

## Introductions

- ▶ Who are you?
- ▶ Who am I?
- ▶ Who is this dog?



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# What will we learn today?

How are our brains  
wired to go from  
**STUCK** to **UNSTUCK**?

How are  
executive functions  
and strengths  
related?

How can we  
enhance executive  
functions in kids?

(in a fun way without making them hate our  
guts for the rest of their lives)

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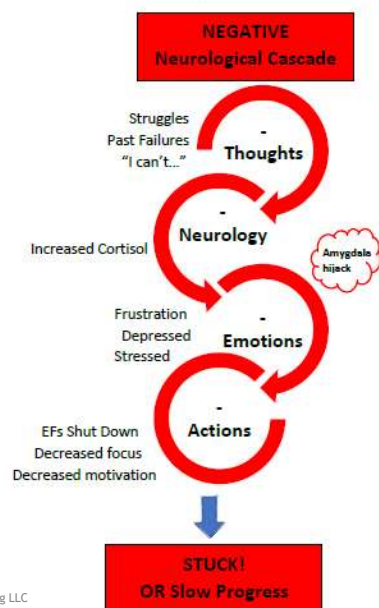
## TIME CHECK

Up Next: The Neurology of Stuck and Unstuck

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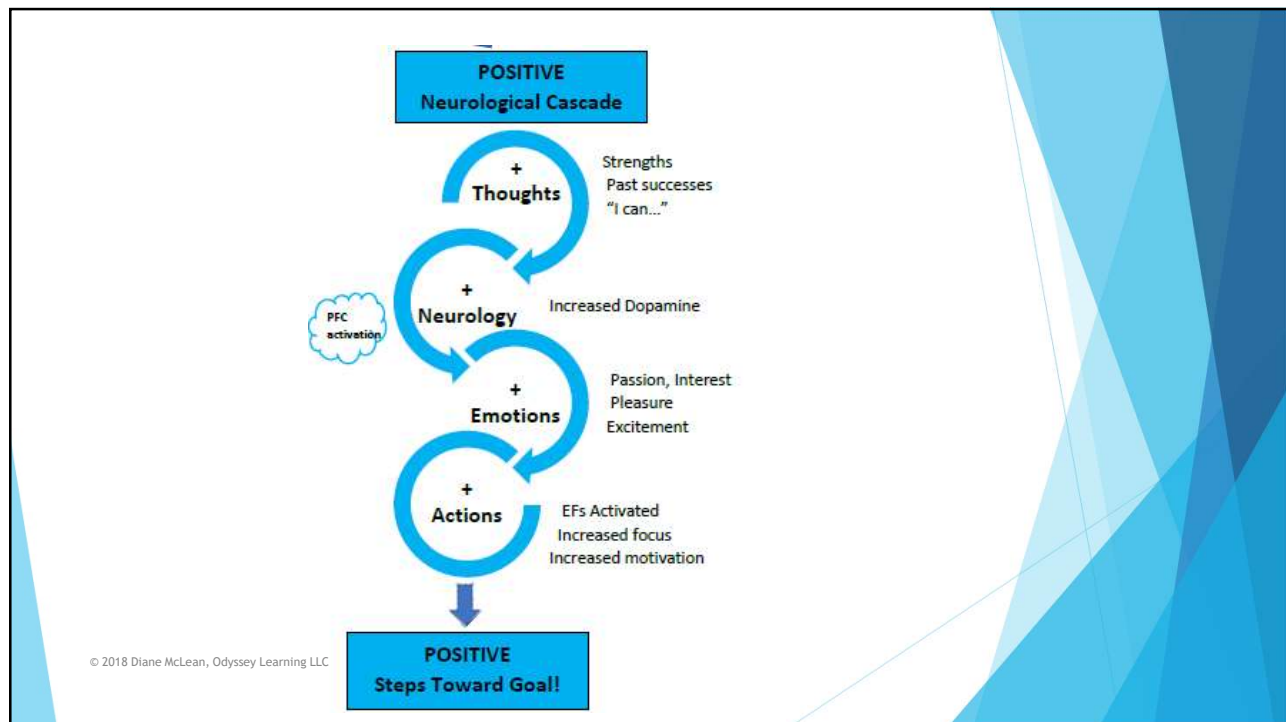
# The Neurology of Stuck and Unstuck

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Motivation is NOT enough to activate the brain and EFs.



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# TIME CHECK

Up Next: Strengths and Executive Functions

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How are Strengths Related to  
Executive Functions?


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## Many Types of Strengths

- **Performance Strengths**  
What are my talents, abilities, things I do well?

## Many Types of Strengths



- **Character Strengths**  
What personality traits drive me and make me who I am?

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[www.VIACHARACTER.ORG](http://www.VIACHARACTER.ORG)

[viacharacter.org](http://viacharacter.org)



## Many Types of Strengths

### ► Executive Function Strengths

What are my strongest mental skills that help me get things done?



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Brown (2008)

## Many Types of Strengths

### ► Processing Modality Strengths

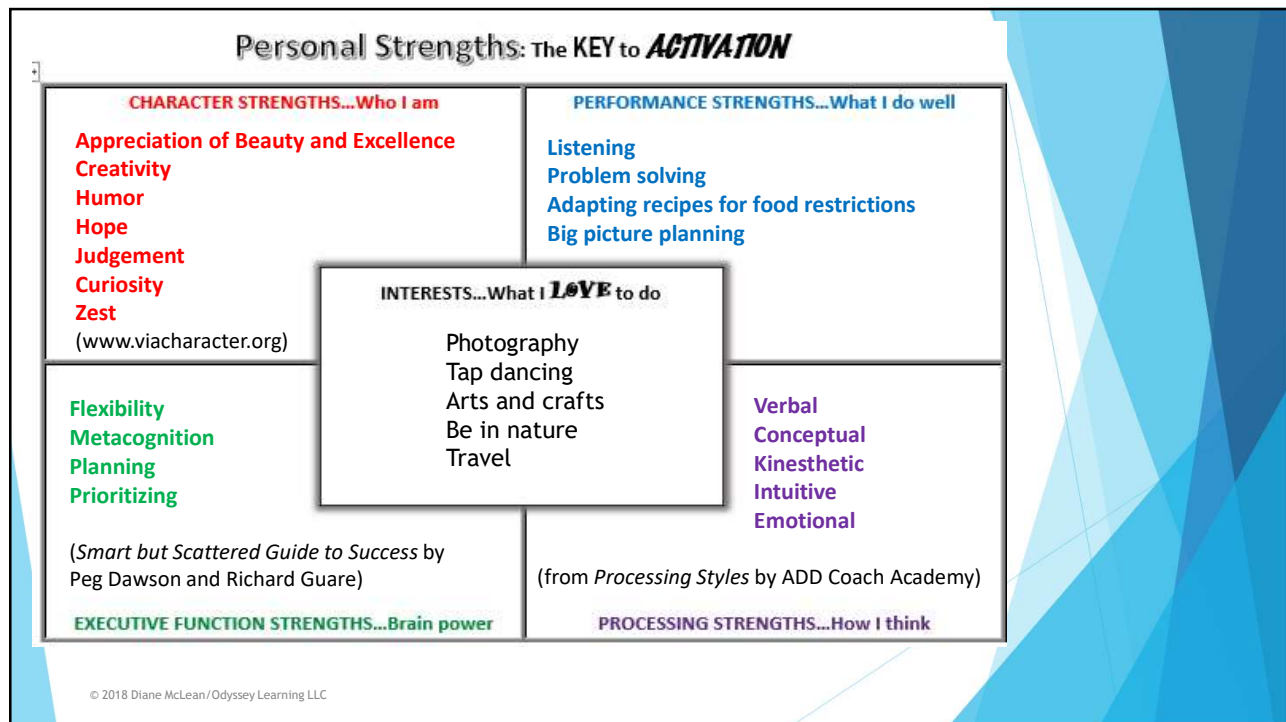
What are the most effective ways for me to take in and process information?

Auditory  
Kinesthetic  
Verbal  
Emotional

Conceptual  
Visual  
Tactile  
Intuitive

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ADD Coach Academy (2014)



## An IMPORTANT note about BOREDOM

- ▶ Boredom can be toxic
- ▶ “AGITATED BOREDOM”
- ▶ A *neurological* problem, not a behavior problem

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## What are Executive Functions?



- ▶ *“The executive functions are a set of processes that all have to do with managing oneself and one’s resources in order to achieve a goal.”*  
(Cooper-Kahn & Dietzel, 2008.)

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## What are Executive Functions?

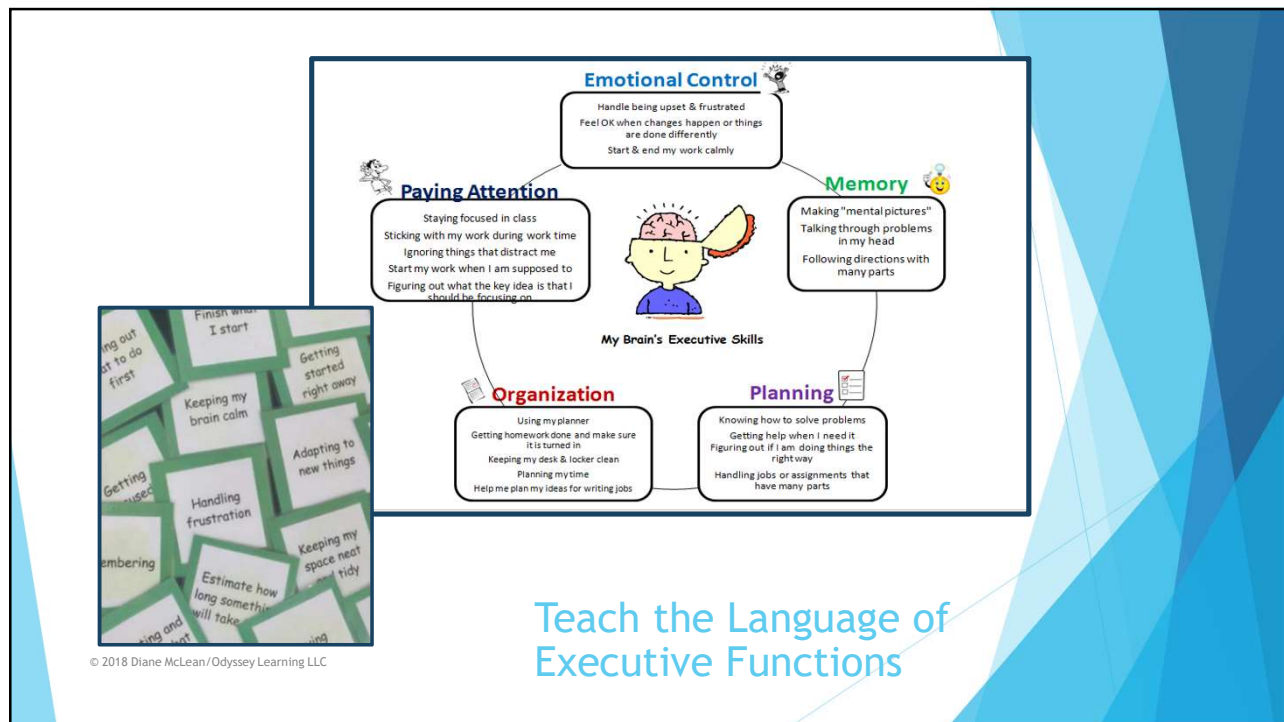
### **Manage Yourself** **Self-Regulation**

- ▶ Impulse control
- ▶ Use of social filter
- ▶ Self-monitoring behaviors
- ▶ Tolerance
- ▶ Delay of immediate gratification
- ▶ Establishing attention & filtering attention

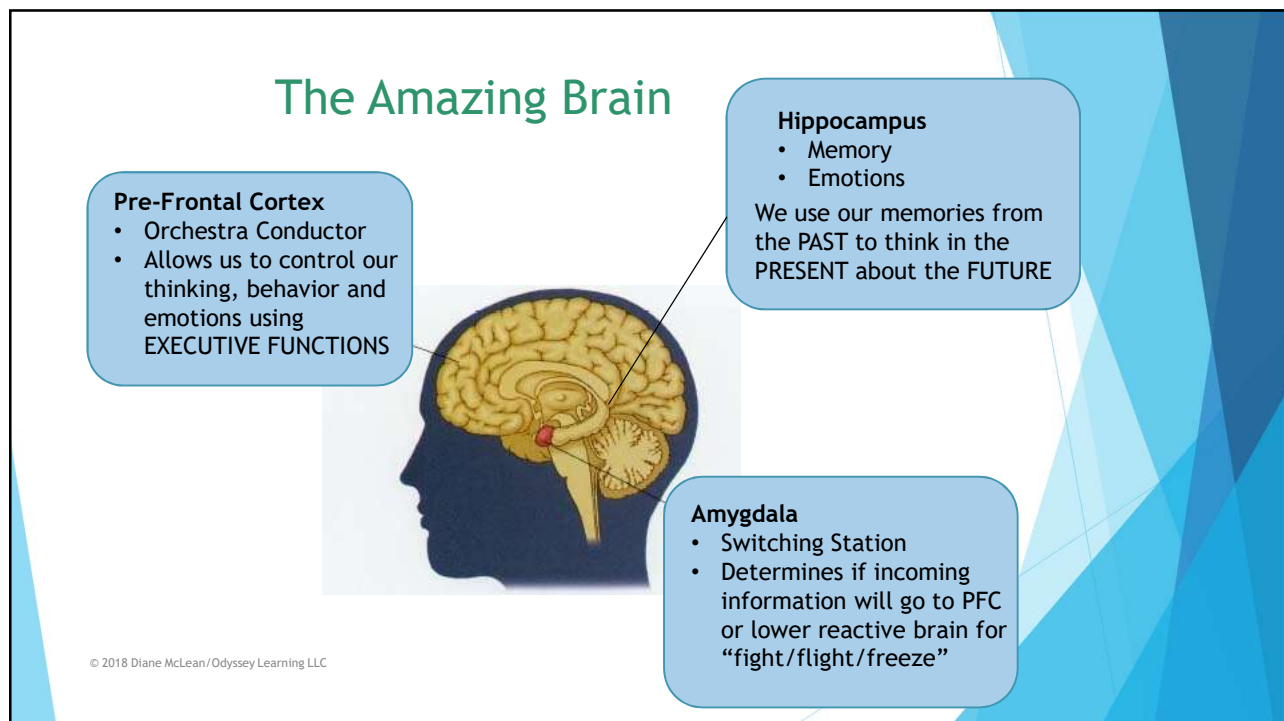
### **Manage Your Resources** **Mental Control**

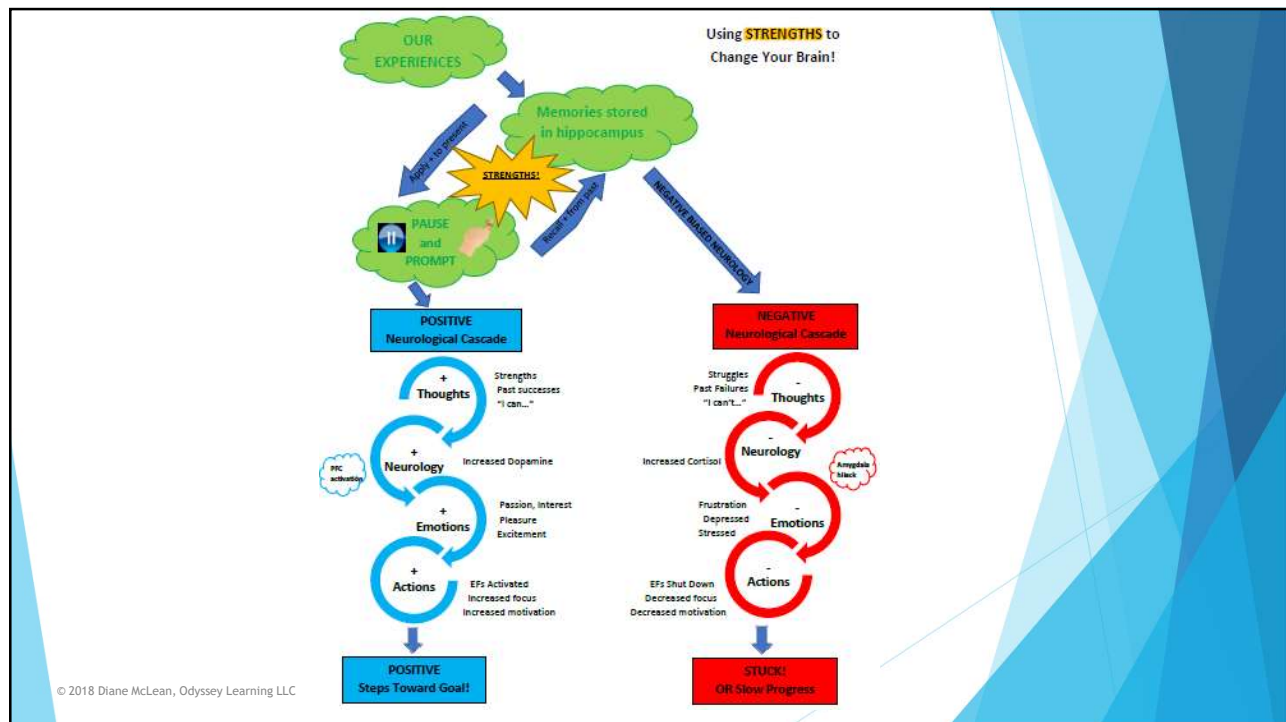
- ▶ Organizing time, materials, projects
- ▶ Prioritizing
- ▶ Attention shifting
- ▶ Informed decision making
- ▶ Use of Verbal & Non-Verbal Working Memory

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## Teach the Language of Executive Functions





# TIME CHECK

Up Next: How Can We Enhance Executive Functions?

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## Question: How can we enhance executive functions in kids?

In a fun way without making them hate our guts for the rest of their lives???

**Answer:**  
Meet them in their world using  
their strengths, interests, and  
positive emotions.

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## Going to the Dogs

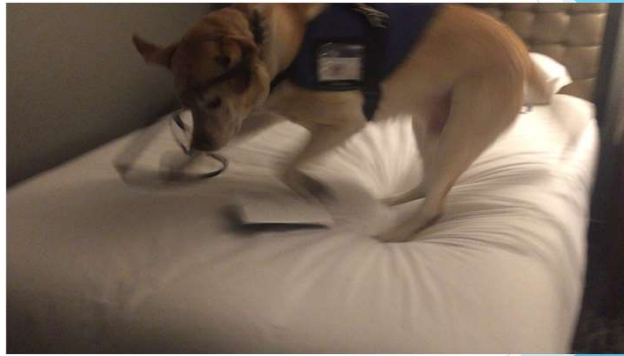
- Self-regulation
- Sustained attention
- Filtering out distractions
- Task initiation
- Reading body language
- Social awareness

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## Self-Regulation



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## What's Cooking?

- ▶ Requires the use of many executive functions
- ▶ Foresight, planning, prioritizing, and time management
- ▶ Includes a built-in, powerful reward: you get to eat something!

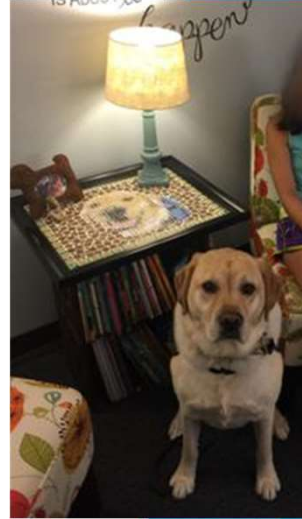
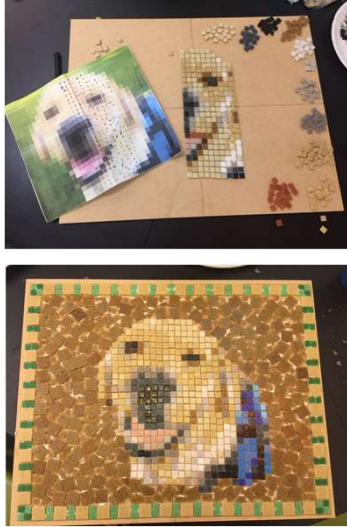


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## Arts and Crafts

- ▶ Opportunities to use foresight and planning
- ▶ Sensory experiences
- ▶ Connections with areas of interests
- ▶ Great for tactile, kinesthetic, and visual processing modalities
- ▶ Create anchors for new awareness

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## Game On!

Games to practice virtually every executive function

Use quick games

Adapt how games are played

Use games for calming and waking up brain



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## Plan backwards

### “Reverse Planning” or “Backward Design”

- ▶ **Start with the end in mind.**
  - ▶ What will it look like when I’m finished? Picture/draw it!
- ▶ **Break down steps and estimate time.**
  - ▶ What steps do I need to take to reach my end picture?
  - ▶ In what order do I need to take the steps?
  - ▶ How long will each step take?
- ▶ **Prepare to take action.**
  - ▶ Who or what do I need to complete the steps?

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<b>3. GET READY</b> What and who do I need to do the task?	<b>2. DO</b> What steps do I need to take to be done? How long will each step take?	<b>1.DONE</b> Do a "Future Sketch." What will it look like when I am DONE?
	Steps: _____ Time: _____	
<b>4.</b> Prepare your space. Gather needed materials and supplies. Consult with people who may help.	<b>5.</b> Set up "Working Clock." Start steps and adjust time if needed. Finish all the steps.	<b>6.</b> Know when to STOP. Close out the task: ALL DONE Review: What worked? Worked didn't work?

Concept created by Sarah Ward and Kristen Jacobsen of Cognitive Connections: Executive Functions Practice.

Plan Backward

<b>3. GET READY</b> What and who do I need to do the task? all ingredients measuring cup & spoon knife rolling pin cookie sheet oven bag of flour	<b>2. DO</b> What steps do I need to take to be done? How long will each step take? Steps: _____ Time: _____ get ingredients measure mix it up roll dough flat cut the treats Bake Put in zip lock	<b>1.DONE</b> Do a "Future Sketch." What will it look like when I am DONE? 
<b>4.</b> Prepare your space. Gather needed materials and supplies. Consult with people who may help.	<b>5.</b> Set up "Working Clock." Start steps and adjust time if needed. Finish all the steps.	<b>6.</b> Know when to STOP. Close out the task: ALL DONE Review: What worked? Worked didn't work?

Plan Forward

Credit: Adapted from material by Sarah Ward and Kristen Jacobsen





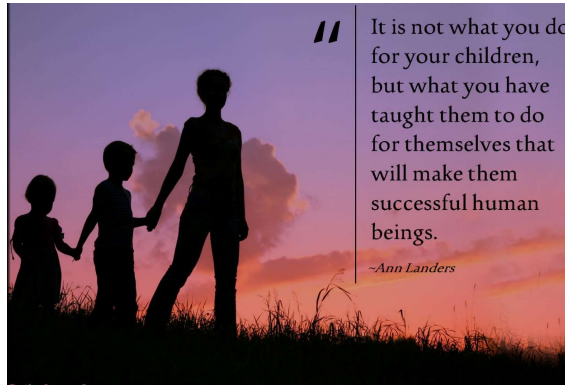
*Book Report*

3. GET READY What and who do I need to do the task?	2. DO What steps do I need to take to be done? How long will each step take?	1. DONE Do a "Future Sketch." What will it look like when I am DONE?
<i>book ✓</i> <i>envelope ✓</i> <i>note cards ✓</i> <i>pencil ✓</i>	<b>Steps:</b> 1. <i>Get cards ✓</i> 2. <i>Read book - today</i> 3. <i>Write out - Start - Oct 21</i> <i>note cards</i> 4. <i>Proofread - Oct 25</i> 5. <i>Turn it in - End Oct.</i> <b>Time:</b>	
<b>4.</b> Prepare your space. Gather needed materials and supplies. Consult with people who may help.	<b>5.</b> Set up "Working Clock." Start steps and adjust time if needed. Finish all the steps.	<b>6.</b> Know when to STOP. Close out the task: ALL DONE Review: What worked? Worked didn't work?

Adapted from material by Sarah Ward and Kristen Jacobson

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## Final thoughts...



//

It is not what you do for your children, but what you have taught them to do for themselves that will make them successful human beings.

~Ann Landers



# TIME CHECK

Up Next: Q and A

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