

ADHD AND EXECUTIVE FUNCTION DEFICITS

- ✓What are Executive Functions?
- ✓What causes Executive Function Deficits?
- ✓What are the best practices for maximizing Executive Functions and increasing performance
- ✓What can Parents of students with EFD do to help them function at their best at school and at home?

Who am I?

- Jane Milrod-
- Founding Director of CHADD Princeton-Mercer County (established 2006)
 - CHADD-Certified Parent to Parent Teacher with 15 years of teaching experience
 - Attained the highest level of training (ACCG and Professional Advanced Coach) from The ADD Coaching Academy
 - ADHD Academic Coach for High School and College and Graduate Students, and an ADHD Career and Life Coach for Teens and Adults.
 - Employed by Princeton University Neuroscience Lab studying the visual features of attention.

WHAT ARE EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS?

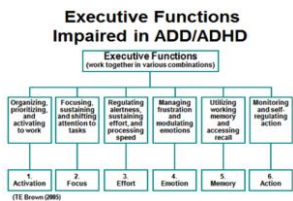
Executive functions are brain-based skills required for humans to effectively perform tasks and solve problems.

They impact our ability to organize, prioritize, and analyze, in order to make reasonable decisions and plans and complete tasks.

Individuals with ADHD tend to have impaired
Executive Functioning in these

6 EF Clusters:

- **Activation:** organizing tasks and materials, estimating time, getting started.
- **Focus:** focusing, sustaining focus, and shifting focus between tasks.
- **Effort:** regulating alertness, sustaining effort and processing speed.
- **Emotion:** managing frustration and modulating emotions (especially anger/ RDS)
- **Memory:** using working memory and accessing recall.
- **Action:** monitoring/ regulating actions.



Executive Functions are
“the brain’s conductor”

- Dr. Tom Brown

- The conductor *organizes, activates, focuses, integrates, and directs* the musicians as they play, enabling the orchestra to produce complex music.
- Similarly, the brain's executive functions *organize, activate, focus, integrate and direct*, allowing the brain to perform both routine and creative work.

**Executive Functions manage the brain's
self-regulation.**

"THE PREFRONTAL CORTICAL NETWORKS INVOLVED IN EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS ARE THE SAME NETWORKS IMPLICATED IN SELF-REGULATION AND ADHD."

Dr. Russell F. Barkley

WHAT IS SELF-REGULATION?

Any action a person directs toward one's self (a behavior-to-the-self)...

To change their own subsequent behavior from what they otherwise would have done...

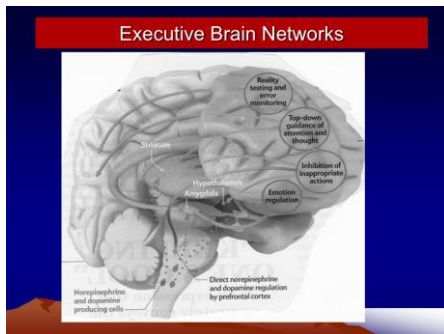
In order to change the likelihood of a future consequence.

Dr. Russell Barkley

How does lack of Self Regulation Affect Behavior

- Time Blindness
- Emotional Lability
- Addictions – Internet, Food, Drugs, Alcohol
- Inconsistency of effort
- Erratic Driving
- Lack of self awareness, lack of self restraint, lack of inhibition (blurting words) , lack of self motivation
- Deficits of INTENTION

WHAT IS THE ADHD/EXECUTIVE
FUNCTION CONNECTION?



ADHD and the Brain

- Diminished arousal of some regions of the nervous system
- Decreased blood flow to prefrontal cortex and pathways connecting to limbic system (caudate nucleus and striatum)
- PET scan shows decreased glucose metabolism throughout brain

Zemke et al. 1990

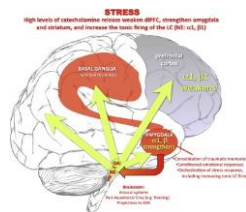
Comparison of normal brain (left) and brain of ADHD patient.

Summary, July 26, 2009

Critical role of Emotions in EF

- Need to be in the right frame of mind to bring your EF system on-line
- Anxiety, Fear, and Stress can derail your Executive Functioning
- Sadness and Grief can also be a barrier to functioning
- Pay attention, check in and take a pause
- Emotional detective – Find what works for you
- Parents: Ask questions, be curious not furious -

Stress Effect on the Brain



ADHD and Coexisting Disorders

- Disruptive behavior disorders
 - Oppositional Defiant Disorder
 - Conduct Disorder
- Mood disorders
 - Depression (2.2%)
 - Bipolar disorder
- Neurodevelopmental Disorders
 - Tics and Tourette Syndrome
 - Speech and Language Disorders
 - Learning disorders
- Anxiety disorders
 - Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (4.1%)
 - Generalized Anxiety Disorder (2.5%)
 - Social Phobia
 - School Refusal
- Sleep disorders
- Substance use disorder



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Therefore, a person with ADHD has difficulty:

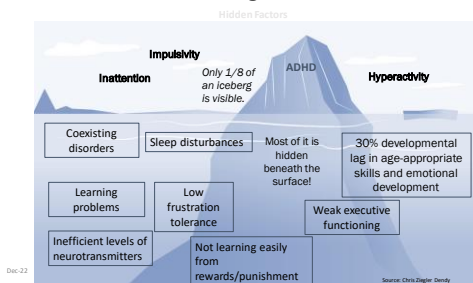
- Getting and staying organized
- Starting tasks (especially boring ones)
- Keeping attention focused
- Remembering what was just read or heard
- Sustaining effort to complete tasks
- Controlling impulsivity
- Regulating emotions (especially anger)
- Managing time
- Using internal self-talk

Biological Underpinnings

Because dopamine enhances the level of interest a person attaches to a stimulus, people who release dopamine at a lower rate might find it more difficult to work up the enthusiasm to act on a stimuli they don't find naturally appealing.

IMPLICATIONS: students with ADHD find it much more difficult to apply themselves to tasks that are not intrinsically interesting to them. Source: Peg Dawson

Understanding ADHD



30 % Development Delay in EF requires more support

- Because an individual with ADHD tends to exhibit developmental delays in executive function by as much as 30% (respectively a 3-5 year delay in school and early adulthood) compared to peers, the role of the parent becomes critical for facilitating growth in this area. This awareness can provide caregivers and educators hope and empathy, as well as create a roadmap for developmental skill building to both support and build the delayed skills necessary for goal persistence and planning.
- Setting expectations that match the appropriate developmental age of a child, as opposed to her chronological age, results in meeting the child where she is rather than place unrealistic expectations upon her. This is typically where the level of anxiety, overwhelm, or depression may increase if there are no supportive adults in the child's life such as therapists, coaches, teachers, parents, or other caregivers. This underlines the need for parental support of and involvement in the emotional and executive function skill development through education, advocacy in medical treatment and the creation of scaffolding to support the child through the academic and early adult years through one or more of the following: self-education, medical treatment, advocacy, tutoring, therapy and adhd coaching
- Source -ADHD and the Case for Support Through Collegiate Age: Understanding the Lifecycle of Developmental Delays in Executive Function for ADHD and its Impact on Goal Setting Kathleen Knight Barrett

One can have a High IQ and ADHD

From PubMed Central

- A Highly respected database from the National Institutes of Health published in a 2011 issue of Psychological Medicine further determined that IQ and ADHD are separate entities.
- The study claims that IQ can run in families much the same as ADHD, but having a relative with a high IQ doesn't mean another family member with ADHD will or will not have the same IQ.
- ADHD and IQ are separate and independent variables.

Knowing is Easier than Doing

- ADHD is a disorder of actualizing good intentions
- People with ADHD usually know what the right thing to do is, but don't do it consistently.
- Executive Functions are the highest level cognitive processes; they help us create a better *future*.
- This often means sacrifice in the *present*, which is very difficult for the NOW-oriented ADHD brain.

*Dr Ari Tuckman, PsyD

Understanding ADHD

Myth #3: ADHD is a Disorder of Childhood



- **Fact:** ADHD persists from childhood to adolescence in 50%–80% of cases
- **Fact:** ADHD persists from childhood into adulthood in 35%–65% of cases

References (Dennis et al. 2015)

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Students with EF deficits often look like they have made a conscious choice to not pay attention, to speak out of turn, to not listen, to break rules, to distract and annoy those around them, to interrupt, to act out...so

They are blamed for behaviors of which they may not even be aware, and which they cannot fix on their own.

Parents and teachers **must** adopt a **Disability Mentality** to keep from making incorrect judgments about ADHD behaviors.

Punishment does NOT cure ADHD!

What Can you do to improve Executive Functions?

How to Manage Executive Functions The Basics

- External Structure, Routine, Building Good Habits
- Sleep
- Exercise
- Mindfulness Meditation gives you space between stimulus and response move you out of Default Mode and into the Experiencing Self/The Present Mode.
- Sunshine (Vitamin D) 30 minutes a day
- Medication
- Vitamin C – Connection – Buddies, Friends, Professionals

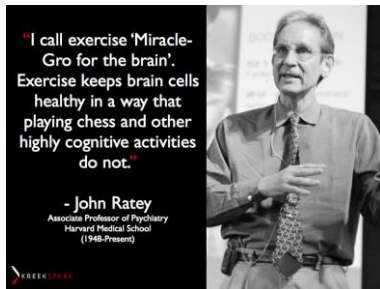
ADHD 2.0
Ned Hallowell and John Ratey
VAST Variable Attention Stimulus Trait
How to create a "Virtuous Circle"

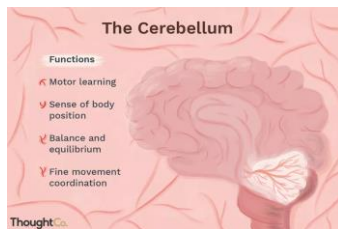
Treatment

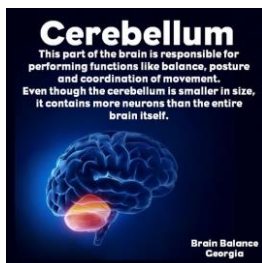
1. finding strengths
2. Practice
3. Mastery
4. Recognition

ADHD 2.0 Hallowell/Ratey VAST discoveries

- Racecar Brain with Bicycle Brakes
- Finding the right kind of difficult for a brain that needs to be active
- Accept help! Interdependence is the road to success
- Neuroplasticity! We can change the brain for the Better
- Faulty Gate between the Task Positive Network (Angel) and Default Mode network (ruminative Devil) in ADHD. (research of MIT Gabrieli)
 - CURE? Move, dance, sing, walk, meditate, BREATHE
- Cerebellum exercises balance board, trampoline, yoga (Schmahmann)







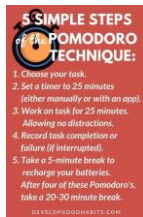
Effort and Persistence

Brains with EF Deficits have a shorter Battery Life



Plan for this, schedule frequent breaks
Pomodoro Technique
Brain Breaks and Energizers

Pomodoro Technique



Make it Smaller ! Brain Breaks and Energizers

Time Management Tips:

• Create short blocks of work time with breaks

- Timers
- Put on the Music and Dance
- Implement a Brain Break by doing an activity *Energizer* with your child
- Snack or treat



"Brain"



• Break down long-term assignments

- "Read to the Clip" idea for novel or textbook
- Break down long-term assignments by planning them out with your child

Why Use Reinforcement?
 Punishment Does NOT Teach Skills!!
 (Book: "What I learned from Shamu")
 The Effective Use of Reinforcement
 3 Positives to Every 1 Negative

"Positive reinforcement" is the administration of a
 desired consequence to increase the probability
 of an appropriate behavior

The focus on effort and on "appropriate behavior"

The 5 C's of ADHD Parenting

- Control (of emotions for parents and children) * requires practice
- Compassion (Meet your child where they are not where you expect them to be)
- Collaboration (work together with your child to find solutions)
- Consistency (do what you say you will do)
- Celebration (notice what is going well!!)

Source: "What Your ADHD Child Wishes you Knew" by Dr. Sharon Saline

Problem Solving

- ADHD Detective – model the habit of noticing what works and what does not – Goal is an Integrated Collaborative Approach
- Employ Strength Based Thinking
- Brainstorm together - try to figure out the solutions together



Create a Routine

- Pay CLOSE attention to your BIORHYTHMS
- When are your PEAK performance times and necessary rest times?
- POST the Schedule in Multiple Locations!!
- Make the household daily routines predictable. Figure out when your child's high energy times are and work from their. Forewarn your child about upcoming breaks in the routine!
- Getting up in AM, going to bed in PM
- Specific times for Breakfast, lunch, and dinner

HOMESCHOOL SCHEDULE	
9:00 AM	Wake up, eat breakfast, brush teeth, get dressed, shower
9:00 AM	Online Learning School
10:00 AM	Break, Snack / Lunch / Rest 15 min
12:00 PM	Lunch Break
12:30 PM	Online Learning School
2:00 PM	OUTDOORS / GO OUTSIDE
4:30 PM	Free Screen Time / TV
6:00 PM	DINNER
7:30 PM	After Dinner Time / Homework / Study / Bed
and AdaptMy.com for more resources	

How can parents help? Structure, structure, structure!

- **Make the household daily routines predictable.** Figure out when your child's high energy times are and work from their. Forewarn your child about upcoming breaks in the routine!
- With your child's help, **create a daily schedule and put it in writing.** Schedule times for important daily activities including home work and chore completion, mealtimes, practice time, free time, and bedtime.
- **Post this schedule in a visible location,** and encourage the habit of checking-in with the schedule several times each day. This is an *important lifelong habit* for staying on task and on time.
- To help with better control of ADHD's instant gratification urge, **reinforce (and manage, if necessary) "Work Before Play"** – reinforce the concept that once work is completed, THEN he/she will be able to engage in a highly valued activity or obtain a highly valued reinforcement. ADHD brains need lots of external motivation!

Barkley's "Prosthetic ADHD Aids:" Externalize all Intentions

- Reminders to self: Texts, calendar reminders, voicemail reminders, people reminders!
- Document and Time Management apps
- Calendar: paper or electronic, use and monitor all day long
- Wrist minders, time – timers, alarm clocks, pocket alarms, timer apps with alarms, clocks everywhere!
- Visual aids: post it notes, pictures, signs (using fewest words possible), objects as reminders

Structure and Routine

Tools

- Apps
- Charts/Contracts
- Visual cues/reminders
- Lists
- Timers
- Rewards



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Creating To-Do Lists Daily

- If school assigned, used that work
- Go online with your child
- Create a "to-do" list of assignments for the day/week
- Put them on a post-it note, google document, or a white board in a public and highly visible space
- If you need, post it in multiple locations (including bathrooms)
- Create a new "to-do list" each day
- Teach Google Calendar Skills – see next slide

Google Calendar: The Ultimate Planning tool





Print out the page and use it as help you complete any of spreadsheet task in excel

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Print out the page and use it as help you complete any of spreadsheet task in excel

[illegible]

Environmental Cues
Work-Space separate
from the bedroom

A clever transformation
of a Den into a Distance
Learning space



Organizational Strategies

- Designate a home for everything
- Break down large tasks
- Take pictures
- Create a checklist
- Set up command center
- Use timers
- Use labels
- Use open bins



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Daily Maintenance

Determine a time (just before bedtime?) to

- check that everything has been returned to the bag (including completed homework, texts, notebooks, et al),
- put the bag **on the launchpad** where it will be seen and not forgotten in the morning, and include
- other items that need to go to school for that day of the week (lunch, projects, sports equipment, music & instrument, library book, etc.)

Weekly Maintenance

Structure and Consistency Make a Difference

- Set a time (Sunday night?) to go through the backpack and binders, especially the divider pockets, to weed out anything that doesn't belong, and make sure everything that does belong is in the bag. Work from a list to refresh supplies.
- Do the same with the desk and other work areas. Put papers that need to be saved for test review into a separate clearly labeled filing system at home.

Focus on Organizing, not Critiquing – ignore academics and the junk

Software and Apps That Will:

Regulate online usage

- Block social media sites
- Limit time web surfing
- Track computer time
- Block distractions
- Ask Coach Jane for the LIST!
- Timed LOCKBOX for all Devices!!

Increase Self Awareness

- Alerts to passage of time
- Improve concentration and focus
- Monitor exercise diet, sleep
- Track medication

Assistive Technology

SPEECH TO TEXT:

Software on computers tablets and phone
Dragon Naturally Speaking

NOTE-TAKING :

Live scribe pen
Audio recording devices
OTTER app, transcribes lectures

Jane Milrod, PACG ACCG Recommendations for College Success with ADHD

1. Lock Box for Stimulant Medications- instruct student not to share or sell medication and also ensure that no one steals the medication.
1. Parental access to Student's Email (many problems occurring from Student not checking their school email)
2. Google Calendar skills essential tool
3. The first-week student must enter all data from Syllabus into Google Calendar with 7-day advance reminders for preparing for tests and papers
4. Make a habit of attending Professor Office hours – enter into the Google Calendar
5. Magic of Study Groups, Study Buddies, and the Tutoring Center – enter into the Google Calendar
6. Enter student study blocks into calendar in addition to classes and all activities
7. Learn how to Learn - Read "Make it Stick, The Science of Successful Learning" by Peter Brown (or read a summary)
8. Learn how to have a balanced life with social connections and exercise – Read "the Happiness Advantage" by Chip Heath
9. Never skip class unless truly ill
10. Fantastic handouts for learning, studying and college success <http://learningcenter.unc.edu/handouts/>

Tips for working with teenagers

- Pick your battles
- Use natural or logical consequences
- Make access to privileges contingent on performance
- Be willing to negotiate (make deals!)
- If something is non-negotiable, ask this question: What will it take for you to go along?
- Involve others when you can (tutors, teachers, guidance counselors, coaches)

Source: Peg Dawson

Create Connections and Social Time

- Importance/Primacy of social interaction with peers
- Connection with educators equally key
- Set up and maintain study groups
- Book groups, activity groups

Keep Your Eye on the Biggest Prize: *Building Goal-Directed Persistence*

- Model this yourself- If your child sees you persisting over time to achieve a long term goal (a new exercise habit), that can make an impression.
- Help him/her set and achieve little goals – they add up over time.
- Praise effort –“Wow you stuck with it!” “ You figured it out”, “Can you believe how hard you worked for that, way to go!”
- Emphasize your *CHILD’S goals (not yours)*.

Source: Peg Dawson

GET HELP IF YOU NEED IT!

If your frustration level is causing major stress....If you've stopped being mom or dad or spouse and become a warden...

ADHD Coaches (who work with students your child's age)
Homework Helpers/Study Buddies
Tutors
ADHD Parenting Classes and Parent Coaches
Professional Organizers
Never suffer alone – Support groups, CHADD Parent to Parent Class

Connect with Local Resources

- Contact CHADD at chaddprincetonnj.com
- To get the Mercer County Provider Directory, write to Janemilrod@gmail.com
- To connect with me, write to adhdcoachjane@gmail.com or visit adhdcoachjane.com

The solution is to educate *ourselves*

so that we replace blame
with **Support**,
criticism with **Motivation**,
punishment with **Positive Feedback**,

and become a part of the *solution*
instead of part of the problem!

What are our data sources?

- CHADD Parent to Parent Course in ADHD Education
- Chris Zeigler-Dendy's Presentation on Executive Function Deficits at CHADD's 20th annual conference
- Peg Dawson and Richard Guare's "Executive Skills in Children and Adolescents, A practical guide to assessment and intervention."
- Sandra Reif's "The ADHD Book of Lists, A practical guide for helping Children and Teens with Attention Deficit Disorders"
- "Attention!" Magazine: "Understanding the link between Executive Functions and school success", February 2008 author: Chris Zeigler Dendy.
- Dr. Ari Tuckman, "More Attention Less Deficit, Success Strategies for Adults with AD/HD." Website: adultadhdbook.com
- Dr. Thomas Brown, "A New Understanding of ADHD in Children and Adults" (2013)
- Dr. Russell Barkley, "Executive Functions: What They Are, How They Work"
- Eric Tivers ADHD ReWired Podcast and Website
- Susan Lasky - Organizing for ADHD- ADDITUDE Magazine Webinar
- "The Organized Student" by Donna Goldberg
- Judith Kolberg and Kathleen Nadeau, "ADD Friendly Ways to Organize Your Life"
- Ann Dolin's Webinar "Crash Course for Parents to Prepare for Coronavirus Quarantine" on ADDitude Magazine.

Thank You for Your Attention



Bonus Content

Extra Slides

ADHD and Coexisting Disorders

The 2007 National Survey of Children's Health (NCSH) found that 33% of the children with ADHD had one coexisting disorder, 16% had two, and 18% had three or more.

(Source: NCSH)

ADHD and Coexisting Disorders		
Coexisting Disorder	Children with ADHD	Children without ADHD
Learning Disability	45%	5%
Conduct Disorder	27%	2%
Anxiety	18%	2%
Depression	15%	1%
Speech Problems	12%	3%

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The Five W's of Life



With Work and School from Home Parents Have Become Educators

- "Home school Police"
- A role no one wants
- Parents want 'study mode' and kids are on 'vacation mode'
- Natural conflict and we're only just beginning.

Structure and Routine

Apps

- Sleep Cycle
- Happy Kids Timer
- Habit List
- Closet
- Brush DJ
- Cozi



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The attention process is comprised of a subset of skills. When we ask a student to pay attention, we are really asking for competency in a number of areas.

Focus: To initiate the attention process, the student must first be able to FOCUS. He/she must pick one thing to which to pay attention. Students who experience problems focusing attention will have difficulty starting and becoming involved in an assigned task. Once focused, they may be able to complete the task.

Select: The student must be able to SELECT the correct stimuli. The individual with ADHD may have difficulty determining what is relevant. This student may learn a lot of material, however, it may be the wrong material, or he/she may not understand how the material relates.

Sustain: Some individuals with AD/HD may be able to focus; they may be able to select the correct stimulus, but they are unable to SUSTAIN attention.

Resist Distractions: Throughout the attention process, students must RESIST DISTRACTIONS: The student with AD/HD is often influenced by external stimuli, such as activity around them or their own thoughts.

Despite problems with inattentiveness, individuals with ADHD can pay attention to activities that are of high interest, novel or occur in one-on-one situations. While this may be confusing or difficult to understand, students with ADHD often lack the ability to perform consistently over time.

Time Management Strategies

- Embrace the use of a written planner for school and personal use
 - Could be school choice, computer generated or electronic device
 - Google Calendar and I phone Calendar also options.
- Develop a schedule for completing a task
- Write it down, make it visible, include reminders



CHADD Parent to Parent © 2008

7-68
Revised 5-2010

Space Maintenance

- **Launchpad:** assign a standard spot near the door to keep the backpack sports equipment after school items, (socks, toothbrush)
- **Landing Pad:** Determine a time and place to empty the bag of the Homework/Notices folder, planner, Miscellaneous Papers folder and necessary items for that day's homework
- **Post a Checklist** as a reminder of what to take that might not already be in the bag (lunch/money, permission slips, water bottle, musical instrument)
- **Take a Photo** of the bag and binder that shows how they look when ideally organized (memory fades quickly)

If you do not have a separate set of books for home set reminders to bring books home and return do the same for library books and put them on the calendar

Structure and Routine

Visual Cues



- Laminated word/color-coded signs
- Post it notes
- Photos

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What causes EF deficits?

Recent NIMH neuroimaging studies of ADHD brains show clear evidence of:

- Differences in the ADHD brain size and structure, particularly in the pre-frontal cortex, the basal ganglia, and the cerebellum.
- **Delayed maturation of these brain regions by 3 years on average (and up to 5 years).**
- A lower than normal blood flow in these regions.
- Differences in the thickness of cortical tissue, and in the white matter tracts that connect and provide critically important communication between various regions of the brain.
- Abnormalities in 2 dopamine receptors and a dopamine transporter gene that prevent efficient and complete message delivery. This results in, for example, lapses in memory and attention, missed information, and poor emotional regulation.
- Networks of neurons that manage the brain's management system require adequate neurotransmitters for clear message transmission; the ADHD brain tends not to release enough of these chemicals, or to release and reload them too quickly.
- A slower conversion of simple sugar (glucose) into brain energy, which produces a slower rate of reactivity and cognitive processing in an ADHD brain.

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 - Conduct Disorder
- Mood disorders
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 - Bipolar disorder
- Neurodevelopmental Disorders
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 - School Refusal
- Sleep disorders
- Substance use disorder



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Routines Rule ! Externalize Everything

Establish routines for a more organized, less stressful school year

- Morning/leave for school
- Afternoon/ homework
- Dinner
- After Dinner
- Bedtimes
- Weekend school prep/planning

When creating a ROUTINE, discuss acceptable options together
then let your **child** choose
How to do this and Example Forms Next Slide

Structure and Routine

Behavior Charts and Contracts

- Set up based on desired change
- Determine the payout
- Keep it simple
- Post in visible location
- Update chart each week



Source: Mary Hale, Create a Token Economy
System to Improve Your Child's Behavior, Amy
Morris, MDW

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