

# **Reading Your Child's Executive Functioning Map: How to Realistically Assess Strengths, Weaknesses, and Where to Focus Treatment**

**A Next Action Worksheet for use with the Tele-seminar.  
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This worksheet is intended to briefly summarize the main concepts of in our online seminar: *Reading Your Child's Executive Functioning Map* and follows the flow of the teleseminar. We have included practical suggestions to help you think through the concepts as they relate to your child and your family life.

If you have not already accessed the teleseminar, please click on this link, enter your email and listen at your convenience:

<http://childdevelopmentpartners.com/parenting-class-library/>

## What is executive functioning?

Executive functioning is like the assistant to the CEO of a big company. And like the assistant our executive functioning skills function to keep the schedule, file the important paperwork, remind of deadlines, and summarize the meeting minutes. Basically executive functioning keeps the whole operation running.

Executive Functioning includes all the skills necessary for:

- Organization,
- Planning,
- Time management,
- Initiating tasks,
- Attention
- Inhibiting or impulse control (in order to do less preferred tasks),
- Control of behavior/emotions.
- Goal setting

## What do we mean by an Executive Functioning MAP?

A map is really about developing an understanding of where your kid gets stuck. A map gives us a starting point and sends us in the right direction as we figure out what issues to tackle first.

A map is a guide to understanding the following:

What is getting in the way of accomplishing goals and daily tasks?

What can your child do with no help?

What can your child do with minimal help or cuing?

When does your child function better or worse?

## The four steps to developing your child's Executive Functioning Map

### Step 1: Gather some informal data.

Start by making two lists:

**First, create a list of what is difficult for your child, your family and yourself.**

What is causing the most pain for your child or in your family situation?

Order your list from most difficult and disruptive to least troublesome.

Be as specific as possible and carefully consider details like when, where and why things are difficult.

**List of Difficulties:**

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)

**Next, gather information about when things are working well:**

What are the factors that lead to more success?

Consider time of day, noise/activity level, sleep, and eating/hunger factors?

It is easy to notice all the things that are going wrong but we have to also focus on the strengths because they are the foundation for dealing with the problems.

**List of Strengths:**

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)

**Step 2: Set Goals**

On a map, you can't start in two places at once. You have to start in one place and then move toward a destination.

When we create executive functioning maps, we decide on the ONE place we are all going to start in addresses weaknesses.

What do you as a parent want to address first? Second? Third?

Often it is good to start with something that is hard but not too hard. A place where improvement might be attainable with some directed focus.

Do one thing at a time (do not overwhelm).

Think about what your child wants to be different. *(i.e. You may care about a clean room. They may care about not leaving their homework behind. )*

Find the “sweet spot” where you can agree to work first. Really helps to have “buy in” from the child.

Write your Goals here:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)

### **Step 3: Identify what motivates you and your child.**

Developing new skills is hard work and we all need to see a light at the end of the tunnel.

Establish some motivators, rewards for progress.

#### **Motivators:**

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)

### **Step 4: Keep the big picture in mind.**

Don't get discouraged and don't compare to other kids

Don't worry about perfection... strive for good enough.

This is more important than test scores. Remember this is all about developing skills for life.

If life is chaotic and stressful there is not a lot of room to discover and cultivate other skills and talents.

**Write down the “big picture” for yourself and your child here. What's the MOST important outcome for all of you?**

## Upcoming Classes

**Join us next month on October 10, 2014**, when we sit down with Carla Naumburg, PhD author of *Parenting in the Present Moment* to talk about **“Increasing CALM at Home: Mindful Parenting of Quirky Kids.”**

**November Parenting Class: “How to Manage Holiday Stress and Enjoy Family Time”**

Registration information will be available through our newsletter in the coming days.