

6 WAYS TO IMPROVE EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING IN CHILDREN

Many children with disabilities—including autism, learning disabilities, ADHD and intellectual disabilities—may have difficulty performing brain tasks like thinking, remembering and solving problems. Here are six strategies that can help to improve executive functioning skills:

1. NEUROFEEDBACK

Also called EEG biofeedback, this evidence-based therapy for children with attentional disorders helps improve concentration through intensive brain training exercises that teach the child how to alter brain waves.

2. MUSICAL TRAINING

Practicing a musical instrument engages all four hemispheres of the brain, optimizing brain power and improving focus while reducing stress.

3. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Regular physical activity and fine-tuned motor skills benefit brain function as early as infancy continuing through every age. Hormones released during exercise produce feelings of well-being and help to stimulate neuron development.

4. MINDFULNESS AND REFLECTION

Mindfulness training (belly breathing, body scan) helps children calm down, regulate stress and sustain attention. Students seem to like Apps like [Headspace](#), [Calm](#) and [Smiling Mind](#).

5. MEDICATION

Both stimulant (like [Ritalin](#)) and non-stimulant (like [Strattera](#)) medications have been used to treat ADHD, which has executive functioning issues.

6. TECHNOLOGICAL AIDS

These come in a variety of forms including electronic organizers, pagers, cell phones, web-based schedulers, and voice recorders. Smartphones and iPads, considered desirable by all students, can offer apps that target specific cognitive deficits.



ORGANIZE, PRIORITIZE, ACTIVATE WORK	MANAGE FRUSTRATIONS AND MODULATE EMOTIONS
MONITOR AND SELF-REGULATE ACTIONS	REGULATE ALERTNESS, SUSTAIN EFFORT AND SPEED
UTILIZE WORKING MEMORY & SHORT TERM RECALL	FOCUS, SUSTAIN AND ABILITY TO SHIFT TASK ATTENTION