

Improving Executive Functions: The Importance of Flexibility

At South County Child and Family Consultants, neuropsychological evaluations are performed for children and teens. In psychological testing, executive functioning is assessed. Executive functions are cognitive-based skills that are used in everyday life. Each skill is important for children to thoroughly develop in order to have strong critical thinking and self regulation.



One essential skill is flexibility. Flexibility is the ability to adapt to the needs of a situation. More specifically, flexibility is using different emotional and cognitive responses when appropriate for transitions between environments. Cognitive flexibility can be used in a variety of situations. For younger learners, flexibility can be used when trying new foods, losing in games, or transitioning between playtime and classwork. For teens, flexibility is important when transitioning between extracurricular activities and homework, meeting new people, and dealing with

criticism. All of these situations are important to be able to think and then adapt to what the situation at hand needs. Improving flexibility is often crucial for kids who have problems with transitions and get frustrated with homework.

Flexibility skills can be used in the classroom, at home, in social settings, at extracurriculars, and more. Listed below are great books to learn more about what flexibility is and how it can be enhanced in these settings. There are chapters listed by each resource to find flexibility within the book. Next to each book is an Amazon description to help in searching for the necessary resource for your child!

Books on Flexibility:

[ADHD, Executive Function & Behavioral Challenges in the Classroom: Managing the Impact on Learning, Motivation, and Stress \(Ch.2\)](#) by Cindy Goldrich, EdM, ADHD-CCSP & Carly Goldrich, BS, Ed **Amazon Review:** "Take advantage of the latest brain research and evidence-based best practices to get kids motivated, focused, organized and performing closer to their real potential."

[Boosting Executive Skills in the Classroom: A Practical Guide for Educators \(Ch.7\)](#) by Joyce Cooper-Kahn and Margaret Foster. **Amazon Review:** "A guide for helping students with weak Executive Function skills to learn efficiently and effectively"

[Brain Hacks: Work Smarter, Stay Focused, and Achieve Your Goals \(Ch.4\)](#) by Lara Honos-Webb, Ph.D. **Amazon Review:** “Filled with actionable strategies proven to improve focus, increase productivity, and promote well-being, Brain Hacks will help you transform the way you work, live, and feel by tapping into the power of your executive functioning skills.”

[Executive Functioning Skills Printables Workbook: For Students Learning Life Skills \(Pg.57-86\)](#) S.B. Linton **Amazon Review:** “For teens and youth with special needs. These are Executive Functioning Skills Printables Worksheets for Students with Autism, Similar Special Needs, ADHD, LD, and Executive Functioning Needs.”

[Executive Functioning Workbook for Kids: 40 Fun Activities to Build Memory, Flexible Thinking, and Self-Control Skills at Home, in School, and Beyond \(Ch.5\)](#) by Sharon Grand, PhD, BCN. **Amazon Review:** “Help kids grow their executive functioning skills with activities for ages 6 to 9!”

[Fighting Invisible Tigers: Stress Management for Teens \(Ch.8\)](#) by Earl Hipp. **Amazon Review:** “Fresh edition of a popular title offers teens straightforward advice on stress management, anxiety reduction, and digital well-being.”

[Raising Independent, Self-Confident Kids: Nine Essential Skills to Teach Your Child or Your Teen \(Ch. 3\)](#) by Wendy L. Moss, PhD, and Donald A. Moses, MD. **Amazon Review:** “In this book, child development experts Wendy L. Moss, PhD, and Donald A. Moses, MD, examine the key skills parents need to help their kids emerge as confident, and capable adults.”

[Smart but Scattered: The Revolutionary “Executive Skills” Approach to Helping Kids Reach Their Potential \(Ch.19\)](#) by Peg Dawson, EdD, and Richard Guare, PhD **Amazon Review:** “Small changes can add up to big improvements—this empowering book shows how.”

[The Conscious Parent’s Guide To Executive Functioning Disorder \(Ch.9\)](#) by Rebecca Branstetter, PhD **Amazon Review:** “With the strategies and advice in this guide, you and your child will build sustainable bonds, develop positive behaviors, and improve executive functioning skills for life.”

[The Everything Parent’s Guide to Children with Executive Functioning Disorder: Strategies to help your child achieve the time-management skills, ... needed to succeed in school and life \(Ch. 10\)](#) by Rebecca Bransetter, PhD. **Amazon Review:** “The vital skills children need to achieve their full potential!”

[Train Your Brain for Success: A Teenager’s Guide to Executive Functions \(Ch. 8\)](#) by Randy Kulman, Ph.D. **Amazon Review:** “Beginning with a test to determine executive-functioning strengths and weaknesses, the book then explores in detail eight distinct sets of skills, including planning, organization, focus, time management, self-control, , memory, and self-awareness.”