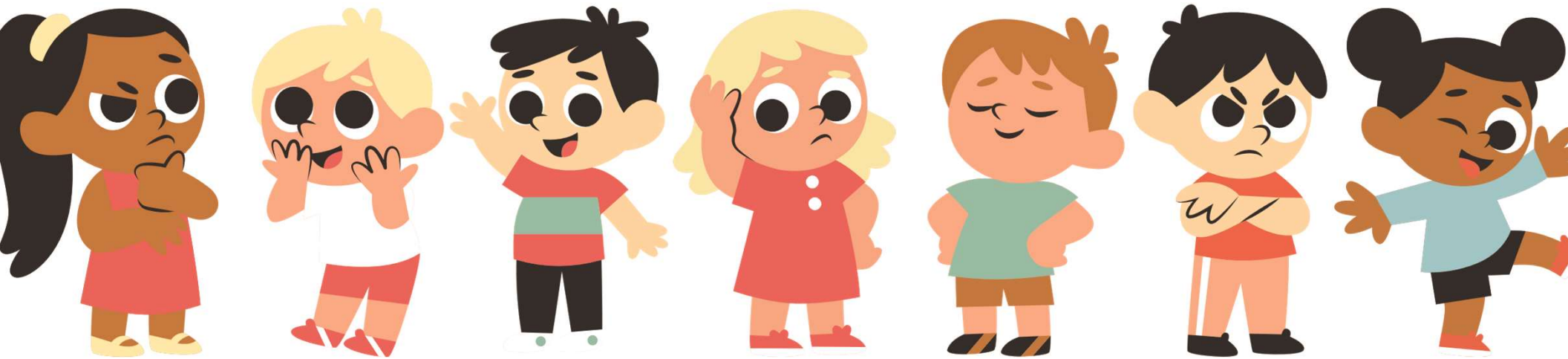


EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SUCCESS AT SCHOOL AND HOME

This session will present practical tools and strategies to support the core executive functioning skills such as working memory, flexible thinking and self-control.



**Presentation at
AUTISM CONNECT
April 2, 2025
by Veronica Primus and
Amie Lober**

VERONICA PRIMUS



Veteran educator

Certificates: Special Education, Administration, Literacy Coach,
Grades K- 8, HS English
Currently teaching 11 ASD children ages 5-8, 9 nonverbal
Sandy Run Elementary, Calhoun County

BS in Elem. Ed., Adelphi University, New York
Certified in Special Education, Hofstra University, New York
MS in Elem. Administration, University of South Carolina
Certified Literacy Coach, USC

Parent of 4 adults, 1 ASD; 16 grandchildren, 1 ASD
Directed a youth leadership program for Clemson Extension and
SC State University
Worked in Barbuda, West Indies, South Africa, Sierra Leone, Botswana

AMIE LOBER

Graduate of Columbia College
Multicategorical Special Education K-12

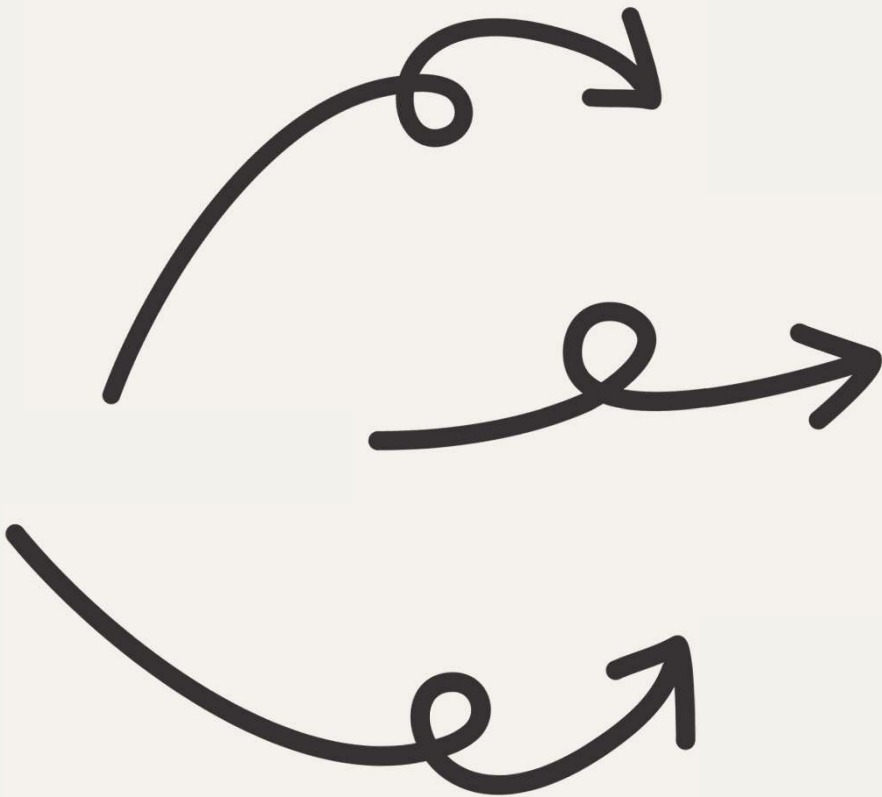
1st year teacher: 3-5th self contained at Sandy Run K8 School

Member of :
Environmental Educators of South Carolina
Counsel of Exceptional Children

Mom of 5 neurodivergent children ages 23-13

Homeschool mom for over 20 years

Owner/Operator of Walking Tree Nature Club



Ice Breaker

Don't eat your candy...YET!



Instructions for the Candy Bar Personality Test

Step 1. Participants will select their favorite candy when passed around.

Step 2. Participants will not eat the candy until personality is described.

Step 3. All participants with the same candy will take turns standing as description of personality is revealed.

Step 4. Participants will eat the candy!

3 Musketeers

You are a 3 Musketeers! You are ADVENTUROUS and BRAVE. You stick up for people and have the personality to succeed. When tempers flare up, you are never afraid to leap into battle.



Skittles

You are Skittles.

You have a colorful personality.

You are very passionate and have strong opinions.

You have many creative ideas.



Milky Way

You are a Milky Way!
You are SMOOTH and COOL.
You express yourself well.
You would make a terrific actor or actress.
You are a natural teacher.



Snickers

**You are a Snickers!
You are a FUN-LOVING JOKESTER
and the class clown.
Your classmates are careful when
shaking hands with you.
Everyone loves your jokes.**



WHAT IS EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING?

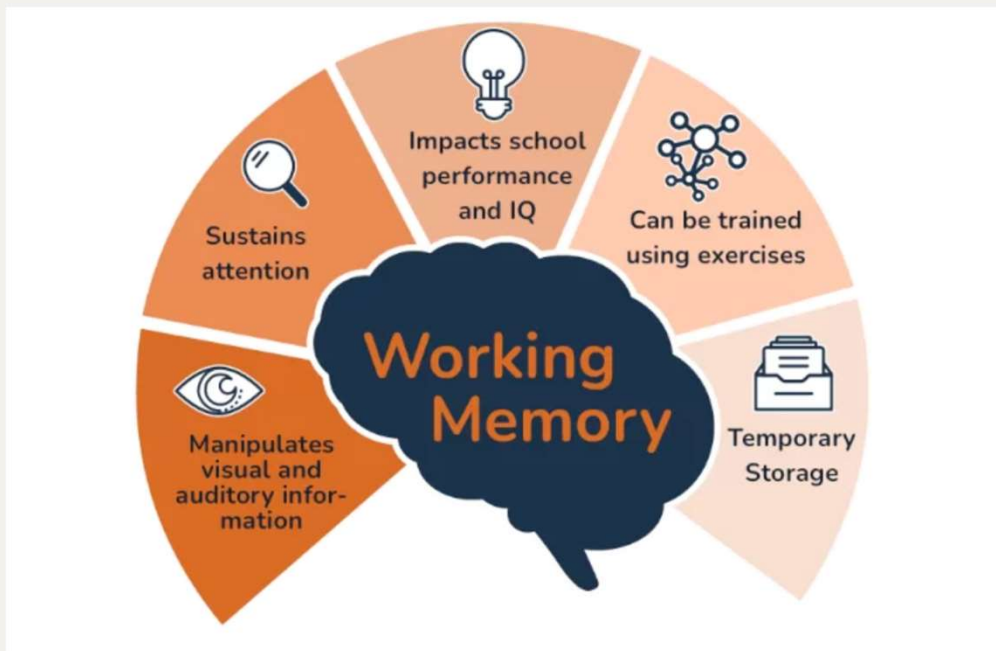
Executive functioning refers to the mental processes that enable children to successfully plan, focus attention, remember instructions, and juggle multiple tasks. These skills are crucial for learning, social interactions, and managing daily life. There are many components but for this presentation, we will focus on the three main skills needed for success in school and at home.



- 1. Working Memory**
- 2. Cognitive Flexibility**
- 3. Self Control**

WORKING MEMORY

The ability to hold and manipulate information in one's mind.



Example:
Remembering
steps in a multi-
step math
problem.



WORKING MEMORY STRATEGIES

Use visual aids like charts or diagrams.

Break tasks into smaller, manageable steps.

Un-chunked List	Chunked List
Bread	Frozen foods
Ice cream	Ice cream
Milk	Frozen peas
Tomatoes	
Eggs	Diary
Butter	Milk
Apples	Eggs
English muffins	Cream
Frozen vegetables	Butter
Bagels	
Lettuce	Bakery
Cream	English muffins
Banana	Bread
	Bagels
	Fruits and Vegetables
	Lettuce
	Banana
	Tomatoes
	Apples



Play memory games such as "Simon Says" or card matching.

WORKING MEMORY

LET'S PRACTICE

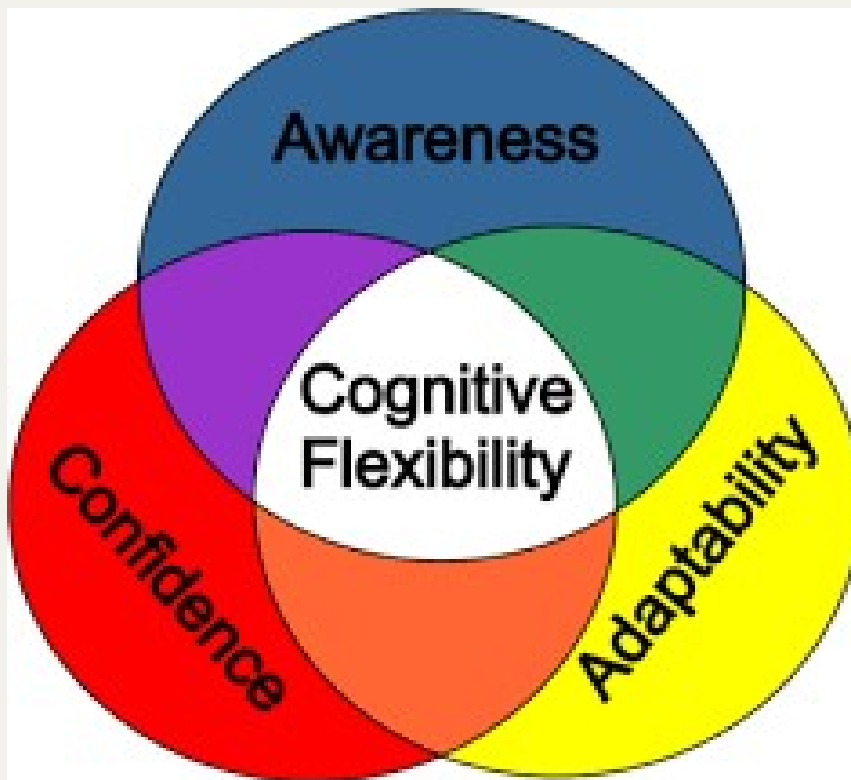


We are going to the beach.

What are you going to bring?

COGNITIVE FLEXIBILITY

The ability to adapt to new situations or switch focus between tasks.



Transitioning
from playtime to
homework
without
frustration.



COGNITIVE FLEXIBILITY STRATEGIES



Introduce activities requiring strategy changes, like puzzles or role-playing games.

Practice rephrasing instructions to develop flexibility in thinking.

Encourage adaptability by modeling calm responses to unexpected changes.

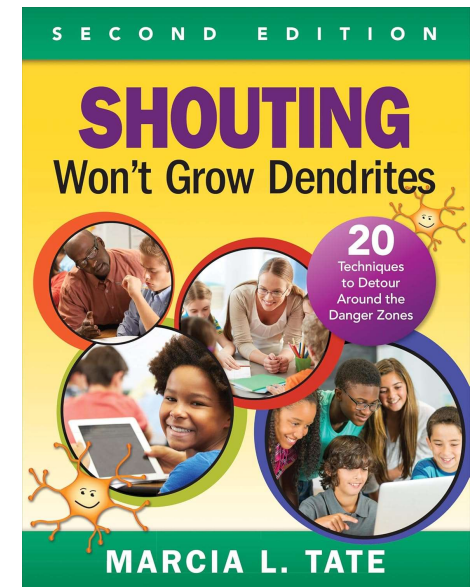
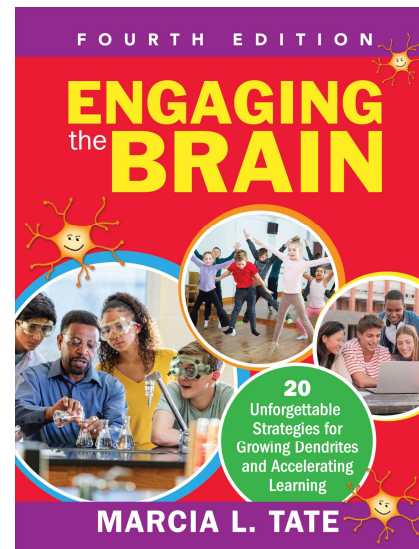
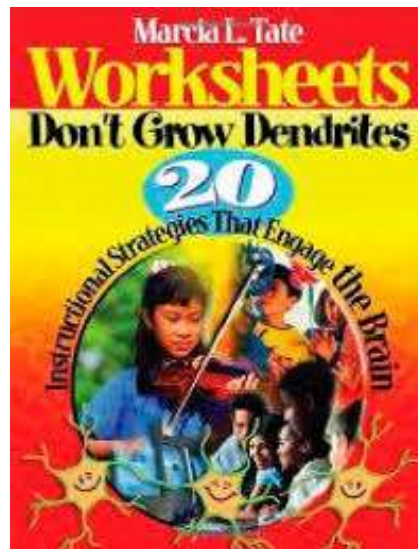


Worksheets Don't Grow Dendrites by Dr. Marcia Tate



<https://drmarciatate.com/>

Educator, researcher and author who promoted brain engaged learning with a series of books, videos, workshops and national presentations



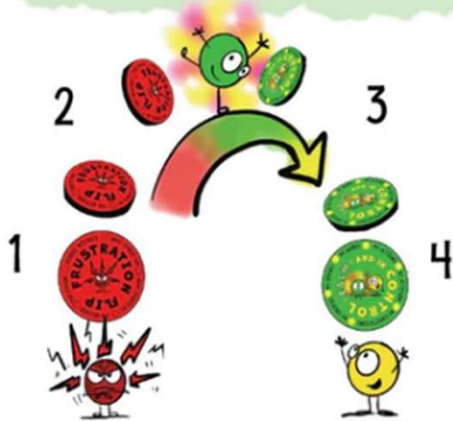
20 Brain Engaged Strategies

- 1. Brainstorming and Discussion:**
- 2. Drawing and Artwork:**
- 3. Field Trips:**
- 4. Games:**
- 5. Graphic Organizers,**
- 6. Semantic Maps, and Word Webs:**
- 7. Humor:**
- 8. Manipulatives, Experiments, Labs, and Models:**
- 9. Metaphors, Analogies, and Similes:**
- 10. Mnemonic Devices:**
- 11. Movement:**
- 12. Music, Rhythm, Rhyme, and Rap:**
- 13. Project-Based and Problem-Based learning:**
- 14. Reciprocal Teaching and Cooperative Learning:**
- 15. Roleplay:**
- 16. Storytelling:**
- 17. Technology:**
- 18. Visualization and Guided Imagery:**
- 19. Work-Study and Apprenticeships: .**
- 20. Writing and Journals:**

COGNITIVE FLEXIBILITY

LET'S PRACTICE

This is how it works! When you feel a **FRUSTRATION SPOT** nearby, **FLIP** the token **FOUR TIMES**. Each time you **FLIP** count: 1, 2, 3, 4. Ensure it lands on the **CALM** and **FLEXIBLE** side, so you can remember what you are in control of! Like this:



And repeat after me:
When I get frustrated, I can stop and see,
what I can control is inside of me.
My actions, my words, my feelings and thoughts,
can flip my frustrations to calm flexible spots!



This gives your mind a chance to calm down and apply **FLEXIBLE THINKING** to the problem.



SELF CONTROL

The ability to resist impulses and stay focused on the task at hand.



Waiting for
your turn in
a game
instead of
interrupting.



SELF CONTROL STRATEGIES

Play games that require impulse control, such as "Red Light, Green Light."

Teach mindfulness exercises to help children pause and reflect before acting.

Create a "calm-down corner" for children to regain composure.



REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

[Shapes for deep breathing](#)





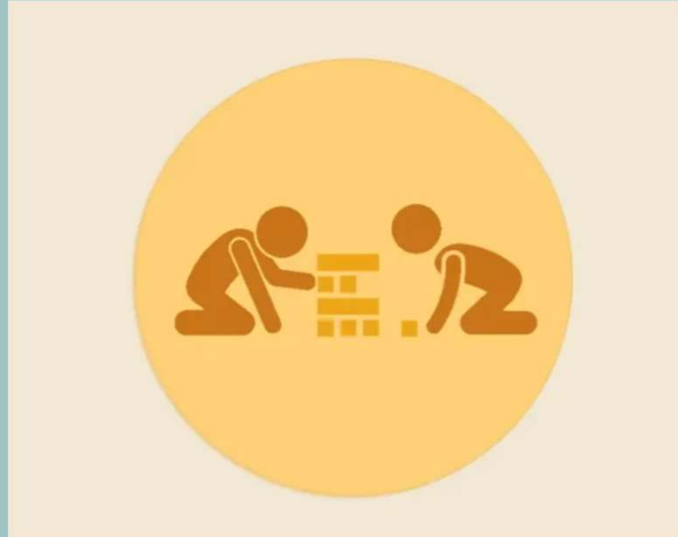
zones of REGULATION

	BLUE	GREEN	YELLOW	RED
WHEN I AM:	tired bored sad	happy calm focused	excited frustrated anxious	out of control angry overwhelmed
I CAN:	drink water, have a snack, go for a walk, take a nap	keep up the good work! 😊	take a break, 3 deep breaths, play with a fidget, ask for help	go for a walk, drink cold water, relax my muscles, 10 deep breaths, grounding



REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

[A Guide to Executive Functioning](#)



CONCLUSION

