



THE PATH TO PEACE THERAPY
presents

The Teen Executive Function Toolkit

*Brain-based strategies and simple daily systems
for focus, motivation, emotional regulation, and follow-through*

Created by Stephanie Buckley, AMFT
ADHD Specialist & Family Systems Coach
ThePathToPeaceTherapy.com

START HERE

Welcome to the Toolkit

This toolkit was made for parents and teens navigating ADHD, anxiety, overwhelm, procrastination, and the frustrating cycle of inconsistent follow-through. It pairs brain-based understanding with simple daily systems that support success at home, at school, and in sports.

Here is the most important thing to know before you begin. The goal is not perfection, and it is not adding pressure to a teen who is already working hard. The goal is awareness. Every tracker in here is designed to put gentle, shame-free information in front of your teen so the data can do the teaching instead of you having to nag. Awareness comes before change, every time.

A note for parents. Let your teen own these pages. Your job is to set up the system and stay warm, not to police it. A tracker your teen fills in imperfectly is working. A tracker you fill in for them is not.

Inside you will find a parent education guide, a daily executive function tracker, a weekly success planner, a monthly goal tracker, a hydration and protein guide, a family movement challenge, a sleep and recovery checklist, and a set of motivation-building strategies. Use what helps. Leave what does not. Come back to it when you are ready.

GUIDE 1**Parent Education Guide**

When we call a teen lazy, forgetful, or unmotivated, we are almost always describing something more specific and more fixable: executive functioning.

Define it. Executive functioning is the brain's management system, run largely by the prefrontal cortex. It handles planning, getting started, working memory, impulse control, prioritizing, managing emotions, and seeing a task through to the end.

In the teenage brain, this management system is still very much under construction, and it does not finish developing until the mid-twenties. For a teen with ADHD or anxiety, it is running with even fewer resources. So the dishes left undone, the forgotten assignment, the meltdown over something small, these are rarely about character. They are about a system that is overloaded.

The shift that changes everything

Stop asking, why won't my teen just do it. Start asking, what is getting in the way, and what would make the next step smaller. Executive functioning struggles are not solved by trying harder. They are solved by building external scaffolding, simple systems that hold the parts of the task the brain keeps dropping. That is what every tracker in this toolkit is for.

What you can do

- Externalize it. Get the task out of their head and onto a page where it stops taking up working memory.
- Shrink the first step. Initiation is the hardest part. The win is starting, not finishing.
- Stay warm when it is hard. A regulated parent helps regulate a dysregulated teen. Your calm is part of their scaffolding.
- Praise the process, not just the outcome. Notice the effort and the trying, especially on the days the result is messy.

TRACKER 1**Daily Executive Function Tracker**

A simple end-of-day check-in. The point is noticing patterns over time, not scoring a perfect day. Rate each area from 1 (rough) to 5 (great), or just check it off.

Daily area	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Got started without a long delay							
Remembered what I needed							
Managed distractions							
Handled frustration							
Followed through to the end							
Moved my body							
Felt steady overall							

One small win today: _____

One thing I'll try tomorrow: _____

PLANNER 1**Weekly Success Planner**

Plan the week in a way the brain can actually hold. Pick no more than three priorities. Three is a ceiling, not a target.

This week's top 3 priorities	Why it matters	Done?
1.		
2.		
3.		

Daily anchors

Day	Most important thing	Movement	Sleep target
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

TRACKER 2**Monthly Goal Tracker**

Big goals get dropped when they stay big. This page breaks one monthly goal into small, trackable steps.

This month's goal: _____

Weekly milestone	Step I'll take	Check-in
Week 1		
Week 2		
Week 3		
Week 4		

Reflection. At month's end: What worked? What got in the way? What is one thing I'll keep doing next month?

GUIDE 2

Hydration & Protein Guide

The ADHD brain runs on stable fuel. Two of the simplest, most overlooked levers are water and protein, because both directly affect focus, energy, and mood.

Why it matters. Even mild dehydration drains attention and worsens irritability. And a protein-anchored breakfast helps steady blood sugar and supports the dopamine system that focus depends on. A sugary breakfast alone often means a crash by mid-morning.

Simple targets

- Start the day with a glass of water before anything else.
- Anchor breakfast with protein: eggs, Greek yogurt, nut butter, a smoothie with protein.
- Keep a water bottle visible. Out of sight is out of mind for the ADHD brain.
- Pair every screen break with a sip and a stretch.

Daily fuel tracker

Day	Water (cups)	Protein at breakfast?	Felt focused?
Mon			
Tue			
Wed			
Thu			
Fri			
Sat			
Sun			

This is general wellness information, not medical or nutritional advice. For individual concerns, check with your teen's doctor.

CHALLENGE**Family Movement Challenge**

Movement is not a reward or a punishment. It is medicine for the brain, and it works even better together. This challenge turns movement into connection instead of one more rule.

The rule. No competition, no shame, no athletic ability required. The only goal is to move, together, a little more than yesterday. When someone is low, the family says: looks like we need a loop.

Pick your loops

- After-dinner walk around the block, dog included.
- Ten-minute kitchen dance break.
- Weekend hike, bike ride, or trip to the park.
- Saturday morning chores done at double speed, together.

Weekly family movement log

Day	What we did	Who joined	Minutes
Mon			
Tue			
Wed			
Thu			
Fri			
Sat			
Sun			

CHECKLIST**Sleep & Recovery Checklist**

Sleep is when the brain consolidates learning, regulates emotion, and refills the tank for executive functioning. For teens, it is not optional, and the ADHD brain is especially sensitive to losing it.

Wind-down checklist

- Screens off or on night mode at least 30 to 60 minutes before bed
- Room cool, dark, and quiet
- Same rough bedtime, even on weekends
- A calming wind-down: shower, reading, stretching, music
- Caffeine stopped by early afternoon
- Tomorrow's bag and clothes set out, so the morning brain has less to do

Weekly sleep tracker

Day	Bedtime	Wake time	Hours	Rested? (1-5)
Mon				
Tue				
Wed				
Thu				
Fri				
Sat				
Sun				

GUIDE 3

Motivation-Building Strategies

Here is the truth that takes the shame out of it. The ADHD brain is not unmotivated. It is differently motivated. It runs on interest, urgency, novelty, and challenge far more than on importance alone. So the trick is not more willpower. It is designing the task to give the brain what it actually responds to.

Strategies that work with the brain, not against it

- Shrink it. Make the first step almost embarrassingly small. Open the doc. Write one sentence. Momentum follows action, not the other way around.
- Add urgency gently. Use a short timer. A 15-minute sprint feels doable when an hour feels impossible.
- Body-double. Work alongside someone, even silently. Presence creates focus.
- Stack a reward. Pair the boring task with something pleasant, music, a favorite drink, a walk after.
- Make it visible. A checklist you can see beats a plan you have to remember.
- Celebrate starting. Reinforce the initiation, because that is the part the ADHD brain finds hardest.

Remember. Motivation usually follows action, it rarely comes first. Waiting to feel like it is the trap. Doing one tiny piece is the way out.

My go-to strategy when I'm stuck: _____

You don't have to do this perfectly. You just have to start.

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For education and support only. Not a substitute for medical, psychological, or nutritional care from a qualified professional.