

Glossary of terms used in Executive Function Crash Course



ADHD DUDÉ
REAL HELP. RIGHT NOW.

Page 1 of 9

Break Space Into Color-Coded Zones (Strategy for Cleaning Room)

This is a strategy for teaching kids to clean their room (or another space). Often, kids with ADHD struggle to clean because they don't know where to start and have trouble picturing what their clean room should look like. I suggest taking a picture of the clean space and dividing it into color-coded zones. You can then use visual language to help your child tackle each zone. Here is an example of using visual language with this strategy.

Example:

“Make the yellow zone look how it is supposed to look.”



Clock Strategy (Teaching Your Child How to “Feel Time”)

Watching the minute hand move on an analog clock is the best way to help kids learn to “feel time.” The clock strategy requires your child to color part of the clock to correspond to the length of time they should spend on an activity/task. The goal is to increase independence by teaching kids to self-monitor their time and increase awareness of time passing.

(continued on next page)



Glossary of terms used in Executive Function Crash Course



ADHD^{DUDE}
REAL HELP. RIGHT NOW.

Page 2 of 9



Clock (Teaching Your Child How to “Feel Time”)

Declarative Language

Declarative language is a way to help your child move from prompt dependence towards independence while getting them to use their internal dialogue (“Brain Voice”). Rather than giving a prompt, you use declarative language to get them to think for themselves. The Declarative Language Handbook by Linda Murphy can be very helpful with this. There is an interview with her on the ADHD Dude YouTube channel. Type in “ADHD Dude Linda Murphy.”

Examples:

(Doesn't have lunch bag, etc.) “I’m wondering if you have everything you need for school today.

(Forgetting water bottle ex.) Do you think you might get thirsty at practice?

Executive Function

Professionals and parents often think that executive function skills mean academic organizational skills, but executive function skills include almost all aspects of our daily functioning. This includes getting through non-preferred tasks, visualizing what needs to happen in the future, being organized, learning from mistakes, and understanding how long things will take (“feeling time”). Shifting the way we use language is essential to building executive function skills.

(continued on next page)



Glossary of terms used in Executive Function Crash Course



ADHD D U D E
REAL HELP. RIGHT NOW.

Page 3 of 9

Here is a graphic showing the child's executive function age vs. chronological age. Please note there is no precise way to quantify this.

ADHD FUNCTIONAL AGE

Children with ADHD can be 30% behind age in development of executive functions

Chronological Age	Executive Function Age
6.0 years old	4.2 years old
7.0 years old	4.9 years old
8.0 years old	5.6 years old
9.0 years old	6.3 years old
10 years	7 years old
11 years	7.7 years old
12 years	8.4 years old

Dr. Russell Barkleys 30% rule

www.ot4adhd.com.

Frontloading

Frontloading is when we prepare our children for a new situation by stating what to expect and what behavior is expected of them. Visual language is best when frontloading, as this helps build future thinking skills.

(continued on next page)



Glossary of terms used in Executive Function Crash Course



ADHD^{DUDE}
REAL HELP. RIGHT NOW.

Page 4 of 9

An example of frontloading before helping at a school bake sale is:

“When we get to the bake sale, tables will be set up in a row outside on the field. We have to sign in and go to the table where we’re helping. What you should look like when you’re at the table is to help me out and ask people who come to our table what they would like to buy. You must stay at the table for the first 30 minutes, and then you can walk around the event.”

“Future Plan Time” (Visualizing Yourself Doing Something in the Future)

Kids with ADHD have difficulty visualizing themselves doing something in the future (non-verbal working memory). They may also need help to end preferred activities. When you use the clock strategy (see section 3), the last five minutes should be in a different color (pink in the picture below). This is future plan time and signals that they need to start wrapping up whatever they are doing and visualize what’s coming up next.



Example:

“The big hand moved into future plan time; what do you need to start doing to end your video game? Start picturing yourself ending the game and moving to the next activity.”

Glossary of terms used in Executive Function Crash Course



ADHD DUDÉ
REAL HELP. RIGHT NOW.

Page 5 of 9

Incentives

Incentives (I also refer to this as your child's "currency") are things that motivate your child to persevere through a non-preferred task. They should receive this incentive as soon as possible after completing the task (within their time horizon).

Example:

"You can earn 15 minutes of YouTube time (7:30-7:45 am) if you are ready for school by 7:30."

Internal Dialogue ("Brain Voice")

Internal dialogue is also called self-directed talk and describes conversations "inside our head" about what's next, how to solve problems, what we should be doing, etc. Kids with ADHD often have delayed development of their internal dialogue and use it inconsistently. We can help them to build their internal dialogue by modeling our internal dialogue out loud.

Example:

"I have to pick up dinner, so I think we'll stop by the market on the way home from your practice."

Language of Accountability

Language of accountability frames the child's behavior and outcome as choices, which gives them ownership of what happens. This proactive approach allows you to move away from being reactive or making threats of punishment.

Example:

*"If you choose to do your chores, then you are choosing to have your Xbox time after dinner. If you ignore your chores, you choose not to have the Xbox."
choose not to have the Xbox."*

Non-verbal Working Memory ("Future Thinking Skills")

Kids with ADHD struggle with non-verbal working memory. This is the ability to visualize oneself doing something in the future, imagine the potential outcomes of choices, and picture what completed tasks should look like.

Purposeful Recognition and Praise

This is when you give specific and concrete praise for effort, resiliency, patience, consideration for others, and flexibility (lagging skills in kids with ADHD). The ADHD brain responds exceptionally well to specific recognition and praise.

(continued on next page)



Glossary of terms used in Executive Function Crash Course



ADHD DUDÉ
REAL HELP. RIGHT NOW.

Page 6 of 9

Example:

"That was awesome when you went to your first day of karate, even though you were nervous. It's uncomfortable going into new situations, and you did it."

Scaffolding and Gradual Release of Responsibility

Scaffolding is when we provide structure and support to help kids learn new skills. We then slowly give them more independence as they master the skill. The goal is to eventually be able to do the task independently without adult prompting.

Example for taking out the trash:

Model- You show them how to take out the trash

1. Share- We take out the trash together
2. Guide- They take out the trash independently, but we offer guidance as needed
3. Apply- They take out the trash by themselves.



Glossary of terms used in Executive Function Crash Course



ADHD DUDÉ
REAL HELP. RIGHT NOW.

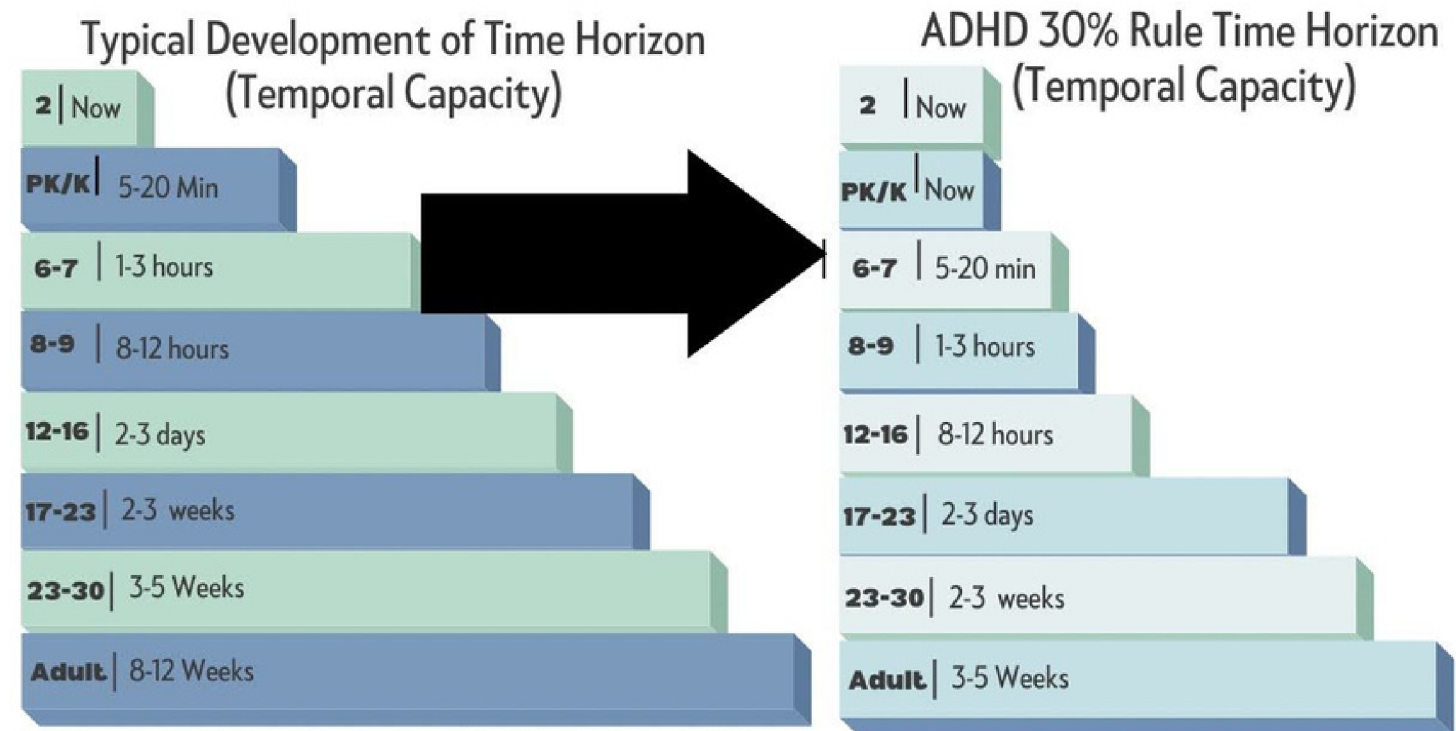
Page 7 of 9

Time Blindness

Many kids with ADHD have difficulty conceptualizing how long things will take (especially non-preferred tasks) and lose track of time if they are hyper-focused on something. Please note that things like timers, “the red countdown timer,” and digital clocks do not help kids learn to sense the passage of time. The strategies covered in section 3 most effectively teach kids to “feel time.”

Time Horizon

The time horizon is how far your child can visualize the future. Privileges/rewards should always be given within the child’s time horizon; otherwise, they are ineffective because the child can’t connect their behavior to earning the reward.



Adapted from Kristen Jacobsen, M.S., CCC/SLP & Sarah Ward, M.S., CCC/SLP June 2017

(Graphic from Sarah Ward & Kristen Jacobsen of Cognitive Connections, LLC)



Glossary of terms used in Executive Function Crash Course



ADHD DUDE
REAL HELP. RIGHT NOW.

Page 8 of 9

Visual Language

Visual language is a way of helping develop non-verbal working memory (future thinking skills) by helping your child create a mental image in the head of what the result of something should be. It can also help develop internal dialogue as you require your child to use their internal dialogue.

Examples:

“What should you look like when it rains? Are you wearing things that will help keep you dry?”
“Can you please make the table look like it’s supposed to look when it’s dinner time?”

Visual Timeline

Visual timelines show a picture of your child completing each step of their daily routine or chores. This helps to activate their non-verbal working memory (future thinking skills) because they see themselves doing each task. The last picture should be what the completed task looks like. You can also have an incentive at the end of the timeline to help motivate them.

*Checklist or generic picture charts are not as effective because they don’t activate non-verbal working memory

Example of an incentive:

They can earn 15 minutes of YouTube time (7:30-7:45 am) if they are ready for school by 7:30.



Glossary of terms used in Executive Function Crash Course



ADHD DUDE
REAL HELP. RIGHT NOW.

Page 9 of 9

Morning Visual Timeline example

