FROM MANAGING TO INDEPENDENCE
KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR PARENTS

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Executive Functioning

Executive functioning turns intentions into actions. Independence is a skill, not a switch. As students get older, expectations for independence often increase faster than executive function skills develop. Independence grows through practice, mistakes, reflection, and adjustment, not simply through age.

Anxiety, Avoidance, and Other Factors

Sometimes the challenge isn't simply finding the right system. Anxiety, avoidance, developmental readiness, family dynamics, or other psychological or learning needs can make it difficult for a student to use strategies consistently.
Teach your student to tolerate discomfort while taking the next small, feasible step.

Build Systems, Not Willpower

The goal is to gradually shift ownership.
Parent manages → Parent supports → Student practices → Student owns
Build systems, not willpower. Instead of asking, "Why won't they just do it?" try asking: "How can we make the next step easier to see, start, and repeat?" Good systems reduce how much executive functioning a task requires.

When Does My Student Need More Help?

Consider additional support when challenges are persistent despite support; appear across multiple settings; create significant academic, emotional, social, or family difficulties; represent a noticeable change in functioning; or occur alongside significant anxiety, avoidance, mood, attention, learning, sleep, or emotional-regulation concerns.

Three Systems to Try

1. Build a Landing Routine. Create a predictable transition after school or class: Arrive → Reset → Check → Choose → Start.
2. Create One Planning Home Base. Choose one trusted place to answer: "What do I need to do, and when?" Capture what needs to happen, when it needs to happen, and what needs attention next.
3. Try a Weekly Reset. Once a week, take 10-20 minutes to look back → look ahead → prioritize → update. Start collaboratively and gradually shift ownership of the reset toward the student.

What Can Help?

Support might include but is not limited to:

- school-based supports (IEPs, 504 Plans)
- psychotherapy
- psychological evaluation
- executive function coaching
- academic support
- consultation with other professionals

Need More Support? You don't have to figure out the right next step alone.

APLUS Education Executive function coaching & practical skill-building
🌐 https://www.apluslearninginc.com | ✉️ admin@apluslearninginc.com | ☎ 301-838-9668
Harmony Psychological Services Therapy, psychological testing, & parent/educational consultation
🌐 https://www.harmonypsychological.com | ✉️ sharonhuang.phd@gmail.com | ☎ 301-284-8123

Not sure which support fits? Start with either of us and we'll help point you in the right direction.

MY INDEPENDENCE EXPERIMENT TRACKER

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Don't try to change everything at once. Choose one place where your learner could practice greater ownership, try a small experiment, and adjust based on what you learn.

1. **What are we working on?**
Choose one specific situation where you'd like your learner to build greater independence._____

2. **Who owns it right now?**
□ Parent manages □ Parent supports □ Student practices □ Student owns

3. **What will we try?**
□ Landing Routine □ Planning Home Base □ Weekly Reset □ Something else

Our experiment:_____

_____

4. **What will my learner practice owning?**_____

5. **What will I do differently as the parent? What can I support without owning?**

_____

_____

6. **When will we check in?** _____

Then ask: What worked? What got in the way? What should we **keep, change, or try next**?

_____

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