

Figure 6.6: Executive function accommodation ideas.

Accommodation List	
Accommodation	Rationale
Environment	
<p>Sensory accommodations and self-regulation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students with the opportunity to take sensory breaks using identified sensory tools in a designated area or method at their desk, and using a timer to manage the break. • Allow students to use a fidget toy to help regulate attention and energy. • Allow students to move to a space in the classroom (or designate a space on campus) where they can take a break to calm or refocus. Use a timer and pass to manage the process. 	<p>Self-regulation can be aided by sensory input adjustments, such as decreasing stressful sensory input or increasing calming input. For example, a student may need to take a break to reregulate after a particularly noisy experience. Another student may need to use a calming sensory tool, like a fidget toy or visual stimulus, to create a sense of calm to focus on work.</p>
<p>Provide students with breaks to run errands or otherwise walk on campus when feeling restless.</p>	<p>Students may need to move their bodies to regulate and be able to focus. Planning for this can keep students engaged and positively connected. Without the opportunity, students may become restless or disruptive, or may make excuses to leave the room.</p>
<p>Provide students task cards for repeating demands.</p>	<p>Task cards (lists of steps of common student actions or problem-solving processes) offload a student's working memory. Students can access the visual of the steps rather than hold it all in their working memory.</p>
<p>Allow student-led seating to reduce distractions and sensory inputs.</p>	<p>Consulting students on where they sit affords them the chance to choose the best location for focus and sensory experiences.</p>
<p>Time accommodations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use clocks, timers, and calendars to make time visual and concrete. • Use timers to support transitions and independent work time. 	<p>Making time concrete and visual helps students manage their time and sequence their actions.</p>

REPRODUCIBLE

Accommodation List	
Accommodation	Rationale
Learning Input (Assignments and Engagement)	
Break assignments into chunks, ideally with students leading the chunking, assigning each chunk a due date.	Large assignments can overwhelm a student's brain, leading to avoidance or procrastination. Small, doable steps, however, empower them to take action and complete components of each larger task. Working with students to chunk assignments will teach them the mental process to do so.
Allow students to use headphones to control the sound during independent work time.	Brains that struggle with attention will often scan the environment for novel sounds. Allowing headphones helps students maintain predictable sound when working, reducing distractions. Headphones can be noise-canceling only or have approved music.
Provide books as PDF files or audio.	PDF and audio versions can enable students to have texts read aloud to them. Students may adjust the speed to help them with pace or retention of learning. Pairing audio with reading visually can help maintain focus and increase comprehension.
Check for understanding by having students demonstrate the task or restate the directions in their own words.	Students may not be aware that they're misunderstanding directions (often over-complicating a task) until they attempt the work at home, independently. Allowing them to interact with the work in a sheltered practice situation (at school) ensures they'll be able to do the work on their own, at school and at home.
Develop and use a private cue to remind students to attend or redirect attention to lecture or task.	Students who struggle with maintaining attention in class may need a private reminder to come back to focusing on a lecture or activity. Keeping it private reduces embarrassment and maintains a positive student-teacher relationship.
Provide students a check-in at the end of the period, to check they have written or typed the day's homework and important upcoming dates.	Writing down dates and assignments is necessary for student success and is often difficult for students with executive function needs. Providing a check-in can be a safety net for their success and get them in the habit of checking that they've captured their lists and dates.

Accommodation List	
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Learning Input (Group Work)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mindfully partner students for group work. • Support student groups by assigning roles and clarifying each group member's responsibilities and due dates. • Allow students the option of working alone instead of in a group or partnership, at teacher discretion. 	<p>Executive function deficits can mean students are late or miss work, struggle to engage in group work, or have difficulties communicating (interrupting or not following through), often creating a negative dynamic in a group.</p> <p>Partnering a student with a peer who is a strong communicator or who the student trusts can help avoid negative social consequences related to impaired executive function.</p>
Learning Output (Assessments)	
<p>Test timing accommodations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give extra time for assessments. • Test over multiple days (same test in parts and only one test per day). 	<p>Students' brains do double duty when they process directions and content. Extra time allows them to give their best effort and do so at their pace.</p>
<p>Provide the option to take tests in quiet space.</p>	<p>Reducing environmental distractions can improve focus and test performance.</p>
<p>Provide the option to verbalize answers rather than write them.</p> <p>Provide the option to scribe a test.</p>	<p>Different ways to express their understanding on an assessment can help students assess content rather than reflect a mix of their content knowledge and academic struggles.</p>
<p>Provide the option to have the test read aloud.</p>	<p>If not an assessment of reading, having a test read aloud for a student (often a digital option) can help bypass visual processing challenges and support attention to the test.</p>
Learning Output (Homework and Classwork)	
<p>Reduce or remove penalties for late work.</p>	<p>Provide this option with awareness, as some students need the clarity and urgency of a deadline to activate.</p> <p>Removing academic penalties for late work can help students avoid grade penalties resulting from executive function needs.</p>

Accommodation List	
Accommodation	Rationale
Learning Output (Notes and Writing)	
<p>In-class accommodations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow students to take a photo of notes, assignments, or exemplars. • Provide students with a copy of a peer's or teacher's notes. • Provide students with skeleton or cloze notes. • Do not grade notes. • Post teacher materials online for reference, as available. Or, share slides ahead of class for students to print at home. 	<p>Students may not be able to take notes completely yet, so photos can act as backup while they master these skills. Visuals are very helpful and can allow students a reference for later work.</p> <p>During lectures, it can help students to have preprepared notes they can annotate while listening rather than try to write everything during a lecture.</p>
<p>Provide speech-to-text options, including designated spaces for using speech-to-text software at school.</p>	<p>Students may speak faster or more clearly than they write. Allowing a speech-to-text tool (and providing the opportunity to use it) helps students with lagging written expression skills maintain pace with their peers.</p>
<p>Allow student to submit photos of work digitally to reduce work management needs.</p>	<p>Allowing the student a digital means of returning work on paper expands their options and avoids struggles with organizing their physical belongings.</p>
<p>Provide the option to type instead of hand write notes, work, essays, and tests.</p>	<p>Many students are faster at typing than writing; typing may enable students to take notes or express their learning more efficiently.</p>
<p>Instructions accommodations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students highlight signs and symbols in mathematics. • Encourage students to number the steps of prompts and problems. 	<p>These approaches help students to differentiate and clarify instructions. This can lead to more complete and accurate work.</p>

Accommodation List	
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Miscellaneous	
Remove language of “on student request” for accommodations (for example, students will receive extra time for a mathematics test <i>on student request</i>).	Students may not be able to accurately predict when they will need extra time or other accommodations, due to some executive dysfunction. Requiring permission ahead of time limits access to accommodations.
Communicate regularly with students and families about missing work and upcoming larger assignments and tests.	Often, students with lagging executive function find out about missing work once it's very late and has been graded as a zero. Giving families a heads-up while there is still time to act allows the student a chance to adjust their approach and seek family help as needed.
Provide access to assistive technology, such as the Glean app (https://glean.co), recording pens, note-taking apps, and lecture recording devices.	Assistive technology abounds to support students' executive function. Consult your district's expert on assistive technology. Many of the tools they have are available districtwide or are inexpensive, effective ways to empower students.