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Proud Aspy Mom Newsletter | October 2021

It's All About Balance



Importance of Executive Functioning - Comprehension Matters to ALL



**Executive Function and
Executive Function Disorder**

Educators and people in general always ask why our daughter is so exceptional in some categories and so challenged in others. Well first- that is ALL of us right? I honestly cannot answer even though I have researched cognitive theory and neurotypical behavior for over a decade now. The short answer is the brain is beautifully complex. I was told by an exceptional Occupational Therapist, (OT) many years ago to stretch our daughter's brain by exposing her to varying experiences.

[PubMed Central, Table](#)

[See Table](#)

As a result, our daughter, after many years has a robust cadre of talents and excels in music and language. YET- she struggles the most in this area at school. Why? Why? Why?

Well, "Executive Functioning" is a large part of the challenge. According to Web MD, Executive functioning is the master function! It controls how we manage our time, focus, multitask and importantly what we say and when. It also significantly impacts our ability to thrive as an adult independently. How we organize and regulate our behavior are dependent on this skill set.

Executive Functioning impacts every part of our daily life. It is the captain of our daily routines and without it we are quite disorganized and ultimately riddled with anxiety. I cannot share-because it would take FAR TOO LONG-the steps it takes our family to get our daughter from A to B. From morning routines to school routines, to extra-curricular routines-to evening routines-to travel routines, to family routines, to emergency routines to unexpected routines- every aspect of our life is somewhat scripted. Truthfully- it can be overwhelming at times, and it takes a lot of daily practice and patience.

There are many ways to increase support for Executive Functioning - however, as stated it is an ongoing practice. We each use visual cues to go through life. Sometimes we write on sticky notes, others have constant reminders on their smart phones, some have constant whiteboard to do lists, while many itemize instructions for themselves. The point is we do this to help or provide aide to our brain. The autistic population is no different. They need us "typical" spirits to remain flexible in our approach, understand that they may not visualize in the same way we do -thus the miscommunication, note there is a difference in how we think and feel, (so there must be the same difference for them) and their memory is comparable to what some describe as technicolor. It is VIVID!

Everyone's perception creates a unique reality. The best way to engage with an autistic person is to understand that they are like travelers in a foreign land-they just speak a different language. I review videos, scholarly articles and speak to industry specific experts- (i.e. my Spectrum friends) before writing monthly. This week I ran into a featured video on a website appropriately named Reading Rockets that explains why **Executive Functioning, Communication, Creativity and Empathy are Crucial** to the long-term success of the Autistic population.

What I gathered from these educators is -CONNECTION MATTERS!

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Executive functioning and reading comprehension

[Click To Watch Video 1](#)



Theory of mind in children with autism

[Click To Watch Video 2](#)

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

I love my tribe- my legal tribe. You can say a lot about lawyers AND I have heard most of the comments-but we genuinely care! This month is National Disability Employment Awareness Month-and recognition of it is a big deal -at least to me. When I think of the rich diverse community we have in the work force-admittedly in the past the disability community did not come to mind. Of course it does now!

Our daughter's educational team referred her to vocational rehabilitation.

Vocational Rehabilitation Frequently Asked Questions



This web page offers answers to frequently asked questions about Florida Vocational Rehabilitation (VR).

[Click To Read Questions](#)

I honestly did not know the depth of their services before the referral. In sum the agency prepares those living with disabilities have a meaningful employment opportunity. That is true transformational change. I assumed our family would be on our own as our daughter transitioned into this new phase of life. Now I am clear there is a dedicated agency designed to help our daughter apply for college, prepare for interviews, identify her strengths and if necessary help place her in the workforce.

After taking a deep dive into which corporations and career pathways are more inviting to the disabled population I noticed the American Bar Association's recognition of those with disabilities. The bar addressed the importance of inclusion and the positive impact those with disabilities have in the workforce

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

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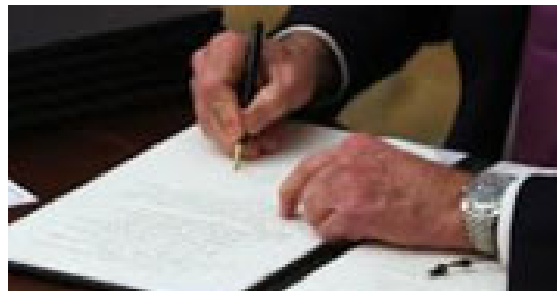


Why Hire Lawyers With Disabilities?

The ABA Commission on Disability Rights and the Law School Admission Council created this video, featuring disabled lawyers and law students as well as law

[Click To Watch Video](#)

Nationally, President Biden issued an executive order. The executive order truly forced me to reflect on why acknowledgment matters. We all want to be seen and heard. The HUMAN experience demands we share our time and talent with each other. EVERY person if they are honest desires recognition.



As we EXPAND our minds to accept others we open the door for those with disabilities to walk through them AS they are.



Morgan Harper Nichols

Morgan Harper Nichols is one of those champions. She is a creative, successful Entrepreneur- who is also AUTISTIC.

[Click to Watch Video](#)

Her candid reflection is a reminder of what it means to represent your TRUE self.

Change happens in small silos. It takes root when we actively listen to each other.

To my colleagues in the legal profession- many thanks for being leaders in the areas of diversity, equity and inclusion and for giving everyone a seat at the table.

A Proclamation on National Disability Employment Awareness Month, 2021 | The

White House

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Vicky Westra

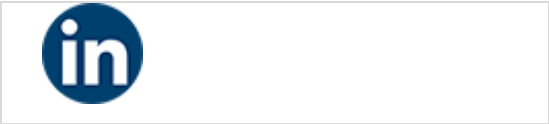
Autism Shifts. Helping people with autism to prepare for employment since 2010.

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