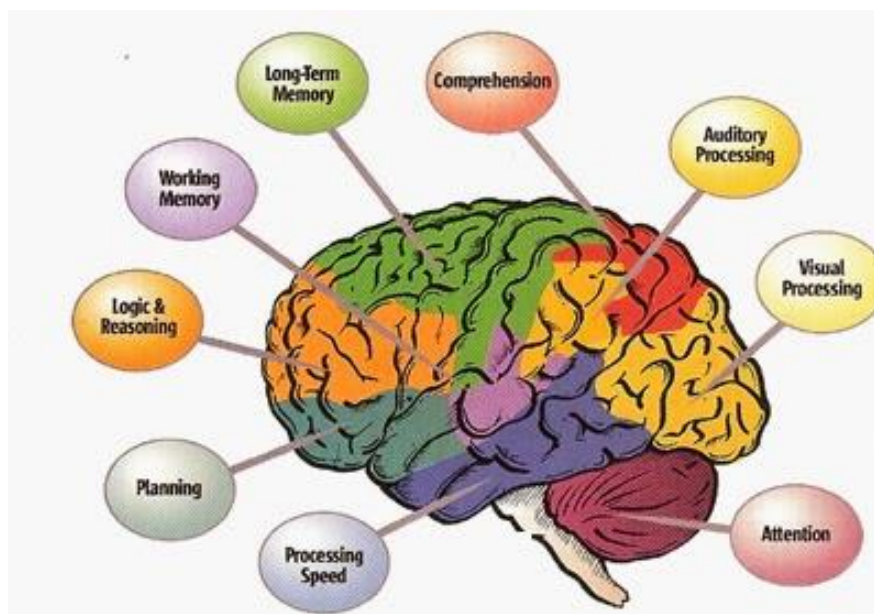# The impact of Developmental Trauma on Executive Function

Executive Functions are a set of processes that all have to do with managing oneself and one's resources in order to achieve a goal. It is an umbrella term for the neurologically-based skills involving mental control and self-regulation.

Executive Functions include –

Executive Functions are needed to –

1. Plan
2. Organize
3. Set goals
4. Follow mulit-step directions
5. Pay attention
6. Adapt to a situation
7. Self-regulate
8. Maintain relationships
9. Multi-task
10. Comprehend
11. Memorize
12. Retell a story in sequence

Many of these areas of the brain are impacted by early childhood trauma.

Strategies for Improving Executive Function –

- Take a step-by-step approach to work.
- Rely on visual organizational aids.
- Use tools like time organizers, computers, or watches with alarms.
- Make schedules and look at them several times a day.
- Ask for written and oral instructions whenever possible.
- Plan for transition times and shifts in activities.

To improve time management:

- Create checklists and estimate how long each task will take.
- Break long assignments into chunks and assign time frames for completing each one.
- Set a timer.
- Use calendars to keep track of long-term assignments, due dates, chores, and activities.
- Write the due date on the top of each assignment to better manage space and keep things from getting lost.
- Have separate work areas with complete sets of supplies for different activities. Organize the work space.
- Minimize clutter.
- Schedule a weekly time to clean and organize the work space.

To improve work habits:

- Make a checklist for getting through assignments. For example, a student's checklist could include such items as: get out pencil and paper; put name on paper; put due date on paper; read directions; etc.
- Meet with a teacher or supervisor on a regular basis to review work and troubleshoot problems.