

Shining with ADHD by The Childhood Collective

Episode #166: Your Questions Answered: Executive Function Edition

Mallory: They know the rule. It's about how well they're able to consistently use that skill in the moment when something else is taking over.

Katie: Hi there. We are The Childhood Collective, and we have helped thousands of overwhelmed parents find joy and confidence in raising their child with ADHD. I'm Katie, a speech language pathologist.

Lori: And I'm Lori.

Mallory: And I'm Mallory. And we're both child psychologists.

Lori: As busy mamas ourselves, we are on a mission to support ADHD parents on this beautiful and chaotic parenting journey.

Mallory: If you are looking for honest ADHD parenting stories, a dose of empathy with a side of humor and practical tools, you are in the right place.

Katie: Let's help your family shine with ADHD.

Katie: Today we are trying out a new format for some of our episodes. We are going to answer questions from our amazing listeners.

Mallory: I'm excited to try it out. And of course, our first topic, we had to choose executive functioning.

Lori: I mean, what else would we even talk about? We asked our Instagram community what questions that you guys had about executive functioning, and you had so many amazing responses.

Katie: Yes, you did. And we are excited to dive into all of your burning executive functioning questions. Are you ladies ready for this?

Lori: Yep!

Mallory: Sure am!

Katie: So, we're going to start with a question from Emily. Emily's question is: Help! My seven-year-old was just diagnosed with ADHD, and I don't know where to start. Not even sure what to ask. So, this is really relatable. Honestly, it can be so overwhelming for families just trying to figure out, how do I support my child. So, what are your thoughts? What would we say to this mom?

Mallory: Well, when your child just got a diagnosis of ADHD, executive functions really is a great place to start because it kind of is the cornerstone of a lot of the challenges that you might be seeing at home and at school. It's a major area of need for a lot of our kids, all of our kids with ADHD. And just to kind of take a step back, what even is executive functioning? What are executive functions? Executive functions are this, we kind of call it they're like the GPS of the brain, and they are mostly having to do with the frontal lobe of the brain. But when you think about what a GPS does and how this might look in your child's brain, a GPS helps us know where we're going, it helps us know how to get there, it tells us when to get started, it tells us how long it's going to take, it helps us reroute if we encounter some kind of challenge, it remembers the way for us. So, the GPS of the brain, these executive functions, really are helping all of us. We all have executive functions helping us kind of see the future picture. What is our goal here? It helps us get started on a task. It helps us stay on task. It helps us kind of be flexible if our original plan doesn't go the right way. It helps us they're responsible for our short-term memory, so remembering what we're supposed to be doing. There's just so many things that are a part of executive functions, and it's really important to know about these because these are often impacted in kids with ADHD. And there's this rule of thumb, we call it the 30% rule. You maybe have heard us talk about it before, but basically take your child's age and subtract around 30% and that's where we could expect your child's executive functioning skills to be. So, if your child is nine years old, you might expect executive functioning skills closer to a six- or seven-year-old. And it's just important to keep in mind that a lot of the challenges your child might be having is not because they're naughty or bad and they just don't want to do these things. A lot of it comes down to their executive functioning skills are delayed compared to neurotypical peers. So it's just a good thing to keep in mind.

Lori: Yeah. But also sometimes our kids just don't want to do the chores and that's okay and that's very normal too. But executive functions, like Mal said, we're using them constantly throughout the day. You can take almost any task that your child has to do or you have to do during the day and you are probably using your executive function. And so for, let's take a chore that a lot of kids might have, which is taking out the trash. So they have to use, initiation. Or how do I get started on even doing the task to begin with? Inhibition, which is when I start to take the trash out and I'm walking out to the trash can, not getting distracted by the garbage truck that's going down the street and waving and looking at it.

Katie: Or me, I start taking trash out and I'm like, oh, I see laundry on the floor. Oh, there's a random sock in here that doesn't go, I should start whites. And then I start going on a whole other journey and all of a sudden, I come back and I'm like, oh, the dog got in the trash that I set on the ground. So yeah.

Lori: Yeah, I 100% relate to that.

Katie: Grown-ups need inhibition too. It's really tricky.

Lori: There's also self-monitoring. So again, not taking forever to go and maybe a piece of trash or a couple pieces of trash fall out of the trash can on the way and making sure that you pick those up and get it out there. And then emotion regulation, like we said, a lot of kids just period don't want to do those things, but they'll kind of motivate themselves to do them. But our kids with ADHD, a lot of times have a really hard time when it's something they don't want to do, regulating their emotions and kind of getting really worked up. It's not fair. You hate me. I hate you. All of those things, so that can be really frustrating. Another great example is bedtime. So, like, that cognitive flexibility or shifting from one activity, maybe they're having fun playing, and you're like, okay, it's time for bed we got to start brushing our teeth. So, changing activities. Working memory, so being able to hold all of the steps that it takes to get through bedtime, and get through a routine in their mind and get through them: brushing teeth, going to the bathroom, all of those things. And then again, inhibition. So, once they're in bed, keeping themselves in bed for the rest of the night and not getting out of bed every time they have a thought or something fun that they want to share or they have to pee or they need a drink or all of those things.

Katie: Absolutely. I think something that is, you kind of hit on here. It's so important for parents to understand is that the executive functions work together. So, we'll get DM's sometimes like my child really struggles with inhibition. You know, how can I support this one executive functioning skill? And what's challenging about that is they actually are very much intertwined. And so when you think about a single task having multiple executive functions, that's just real life. And recognizing, like, oh, okay, how can I help my child? And, you know, when we talk about the 30% rule, we're not saying that you don't need to have expectations of your child or that you should just be like, oh, they don't have inhibition. They can't stay in their bed. It's more like, how can we support? What do they need based on those areas that are more delayed or more challenging for them? What can I do then to help make this easier and successful? And that's a huge thing that we want parents to be thinking of when they're thinking about how to support.

Mallory: Absolutely. And when we approach parenting from that perspective, like, this is a skill that my child needs to be taught or a skill that we need to grow or a set of skills altogether, right? It helps us be a lot more patient with our kids, understand where they're coming from rather than kind of having to feeling like we're constantly having to take the disciplinarian approach. Like, implement consequences when there's a challenge, we can approach it more from a teaching perspective and recognize that my child is struggling with this because it is a delay in skills, not because they're naughty and I am their teacher, and they can learn how to do this, and it just shifts our perspective on parenting. And like I said, it gives us a lot more patience, even though those moments are still really challenging.

Katie: Absolutely. So, the next question is along the same lines, but the next question from Jessica asks, does executive functioning impact manners?

Lori: Well, the short answer is yes, absolutely. I mean, manners are just like any other skill that your child has to learn, whether it's riding a bike or reading a book or learning to brush their teeth. It's a skill that we have to teach them and that they have to learn, so it absolutely relates to that.

Katie: Absolutely. For example, like, if your child grabs things out of someone's hand, maybe a phone or a remote, are some common ones at my house. And thinking through the executive functions there, this just requires a lot of impulse control, right? I look at it, I have the thought that I want to be holding it, and I need to pause for just a second. And that pause

is very, if it's there at all, it's very short oftentimes in kids with ADHD. Which means for parents, we have a very, very small, almost invisible window to help them stop. Hang on, what should we be doing? So that's one of the executive functions that can be impacted there. Another one is perspective taking. So being able to think about the people around us, and that's that self-regulation piece of how is what I'm doing affecting people around me? Not recognizing, like, if I snatch this phone out of my mom's hand, she's going to be frustrated or surprised or irritated. And so that's really tricky. And I think a lot of kids with ADHD exhibit what looks like a rude behavior, but it's really just an impulsive, like, I had this thought, and then I did it without really thinking through the future picture.

Mallory: I think this can be a real trigger for parents, too, because parents are talking about, you've probably talked with your child a lot about manners, about saying please and thank you, appropriate behavior at meal time. And so, as a parent, when your child does something that's perceived as rude or is not using their manners, an initial reaction for a lot of parents is frustration. Like, we've talked about this so many times. Like, how many times have I told you you need to say please and thank you? How many times have I told you to chew with your mouth closed? It's a real tricky...

Lori: Mallory, you're calling me out! I literally was just saying that to my daughter last night, who I cannot get to stop chewing with our mouth open! And it is, it really is frustrating.

Katie: Yeah. We're contemplating banning pizza in our house because my kids chew pizza with their mouth so wide open. I'm like, guys, it's so loud. Please, I have sensory issues, stop!

Mallory: We're pausing the family meals. Everyone is going to eat in their own room.

Katie: Or at least me. I'm hiding in the other room, okay.

Mallory: But I think is again, like, kind of a trigger for parents, because manners are something that you probably feel like you've talked with your child about since they were really little. And so why are they not using manners still? Or why do they still need reminders? And like Katie was saying, a lot of it comes back to your child's impulse control and the perspective taking where they know the rule, it's about how well they're able to consistently use that skill in the moment when something else is taking over, like the desire to have the remote. And one option, and you know what we go into in more detail about how to

help your child with impulsivity. In another podcast episode, we'll link that for you in the show notes, but one strategy that we like when it comes to manners is using a do over. And the reason a do over is great in this situation is because it gives your child another opportunity to practice what you really want them to do. Especially in situations when your child, like, hasn't broken something, hurt someone with their words or actions. So, let's say they do, you know, steal the remote out of their sibling's hand. Oh, let's pause for a second. Let's try that over. Like, give your sibling the remote back. And now try what's a better way to approach that? And by doing that, instead of, like, starting to dole out consequences and punishments, you're giving them the opportunity to kind of rehearse the desired behavior. You're giving them the opportunity to practice using that skill, which we know kids with ADHD need lots and lots of learning and practice opportunities to learn these things more so a lot of the times than their neurotypical peers. So, by doing that do, by giving that do over, you're giving them the opportunity to practice that skill and you're also avoiding getting yourself into maybe that escalating cycle of having to dole out a punishment and then follow through, and then your child's emotions escalate along with that. So that's one option. Like I said, we go into more details in that other podcast episode, which we'll link, but.

Katie: Yeah. Because sometimes a do over isn't right, right? Like, there's times when a do over doesn't make sense and we get that we're not oblivious to that. So we do talk more about natural and logical consequences and how to use those effectively in that episode.

Mallory: Yeah. But if manners are a trigger for you, we hear you. Hopefully this has given you some ideas.

Lori: Well, and I think it's hard too, because that in particular, it's for, me anyway it's with other family members that are really particular about that and the judgment we feel as a parent that we have somehow failed in teaching our kids this.

Mallory: Yeah, there's social pressure that comes along.

Lori: Yes, there's a lot of social pressure that your kids have certain manners and just being really patient with yourself and trying to tell yourself that, you know, again, people are going to have their opinions and, you know what's going on with your family. You know, that this is hard for your child and just give yourself some grace and your child some grace.

Mallory: Absolutely. So I really, moving on I love this next question. It's from Betty. Her question is, how can I increase frustration tolerance and a young child? We get DM's all the time about frustration tolerance. This is a common topic, I'd say in DM's. we know a lot of you are trying to problem solve this.

Lori: Yes. And I think, Mallory, you already kind of touched on one thing that we want to think about. When we're talking about young kids, we really do want to think about what are they able to do independently and what are reasonable expectations for them. And again, for our kids with ADHD, that 30% rule is really important. So again, thinking about a young child, they're still very much developing these skills. That's going to be hard for any young child, but even with a child with ADHD, it's going to be even harder and that delay is still there. So with a five year old, they might be functioning more like a three year old in their ability to be able to regulate their emotions and things like that. Another thing to think about is modeling kind of how to have frustration tolerance is so important for us as parents. And this is something I really struggle with, because I struggle to regulate my own emotions when I'm getting frustrated with something. So I was just thinking like this morning we were in traffic and there was an accident right as we were getting off the freeway to go to school. And we were like going to be late for school and I was so frustrated. I'm like, of course, you know, we left late cause we didn't do this. And I'm like modeling, like all this negativity and my daughter like totally called me out on it and she's like, mom, can't we be a little bit more positive or think more positively?

Mallory: Spoken like the child of a psychologist.

Lori: I know, right? But it was really good. And I think again, it was a great reminder for me that that's what I need to be modeling for my kid is that, you know, how do I problem solve and how do I show my child how to do that in my thinking? The problem is that if we look at all of our thoughts, the vast majority of them are negative throughout the day and our kids included. So again, it does take a lot of conscious effort to do that and to problem solve and to be more positive in your thinking about a situation. But modeling, we know from the research, is so important for our kids with ADHD. What we show them is that's how they learn. They learn through watching us.

Mallory: And I think it's important to point out that you can still let your child see your emotions. It's not like we're trying to suppress all the emotions to make it. No, we want our

child to know that we get frustrated too, but we want to handle that in a healthy way. We want to handle that in the way we want them to handle that frustration. So, it's okay to kind of voice your frustration like, I can't believe there's an accident. I was already feeling frustrated because we got out the door late and then lead into a healthy coping strategy or kind of what you're saying to yourself that's positive. It's okay, I know that you're going to get to school and it's going to be a great week. It's okay to let your child see your emotions as long as then you're taking the next step of like I'm handling this.

Lori: But maybe try not to be like me and have like a negative spiral.

Mallory: Try not to do the negative spiral.

Lori: That lead to a catastrophe at the end.

Katie: Something that we haven't talked about in a long time, actually, this is making me think of it is mantras. And we, used to talk all the time. One of our very first viral posts was like, mantras for parents, I think as you start this distance learning or something, was it during COVID? I don't know.

Mallory: Yes, I know what you're talking about.

Yes. It got shared, like, a thousand times on Facebook, and we were so excited. But that is actually, it sounds so cheesy if you're not familiar with the world of mantras or meditation or anything like that. But it actually can be incredibly helpful, and it is powerful. Like, I've shared before my kids, we have a little song that we sing when we go hiking and stuff, and they're complaining, like, my feet hurt. And so we sing this song, and it's like, you know, I don't know if I can sing it right now I'm embarrassed!

Mallory: Are you gonna sing it for us?

Lori: I want to hear it! No, you need to.

Katie: Okay. So, it all started when my daughter was, like, just coming out of the backpack, you know, we used to hike with her in the backpack. And then we were like, you're getting heavy and you now have a brother, so you need to be on the floor. And she would walk and she would complain the whole time. And so we started singing the song, and I'm gonna regret

this, I might edit it out later, but it was like, we are the Seversons the mighty, mighty Seversons... And so we sing that song, it just goes over and over and over. And it's how, our last name is Severson, and that's how we get our kids to, like, get through the hard things. And so the other day, I was putting away dishes, and I dropped a bowl, and I was so frustrated they were like, you know, from crate and barrel, I don't want to pay for this bowl. It was a wedding gift, so I'm not going to replace it. And my little man was like, mom, remember, like, we are the Seversons, the mighty, mighty Seversons. And so it really does stick with our kids. And again, I know it sounds kind of cheesy, and you might be like, not my kid, but just modeling it, you might see that they really do. And there's all kinds of mantras that you can choose from. And if, you know, faith is a part of your family's life or whatever there's so many different ways to look at this, but the idea just being like a little phrase or something that you can repeat to yourself, that's like, we can do this. Like, I have the tools to figure this out, or my parents are here to help me or whatever.

Another thing that you can do to help build up your child's frustration tolerance is, and this is a really hard one, this is probably the one I struggle with the most, is not always rescuing our kids from the things that are challenging. And obviously you're the parent, you know your kid the best. If it's a truly challenging crisis situation, you're going to intervene. But I'm thinking of, I'm playing with the magna tiles and, you know, the little vacuum cleaner runs into the magna tiles and crashes them down. And so my, especially my son will get really upset about that, like my tower. And he'll be, you know, immediately like, we have to fix it. And like yelling and getting so upset. And my instinct as a parent is always just to run in and be like, okay, did it have two, you know, two windows or three? Just anything I can do to stop the shouting, the yelling, the frustration, but probably going back to those sensory needs again. But I think it's really important to just take a breath and realize our kids can start to figure this out. So if he starts to rebuild his magna tiles and maybe I'm there kind of coaching him and talking out loud, okay, we can pick up this one or whatever, that he's learning that he has the tools, he's learning that he can actually problem solve. He doesn't need me to run in and rescue him as soon as he gets upset. And that's, again, something that I'm just really working on, but it can be really helpful and you can scaffold, meaning like you can sort of fade that based on your child's level of need. Or even one hard day or one easy day, you might have a different level of support. But just pulling back a little bit and not feeling like you have to rush right in and fix it.

Mallory: And kind of going off of what you're saying made me think of another thing that another tool parents can use to kind of grow this frustration tolerance is give your child more opportunities to experience small amounts of frustration. So kind of going to what Katie said, like a lot of as parents, especially when we're raising kids with ADHD and we're dealing with big emotions, we can lean towards walking on eggshells and kind of dancing around challenging things for our kids because we don't want to trigger them, we don't want to set them off. And so in doing so, we're avoiding a lot of situations that we know are going to frustrate them and then we're taking away really great learning opportunities and practice opportunities. So I'm not saying like, go choose that thing that's like 100 on the scale of frustration, but some of those lower hanging fruits, some things that you think, okay, this might frustrate them a little bit, but I know that without help from me, that they'll be able to get through it. Or maybe with just a little help from me, they'll be able to get through it and start giving your child more of those easier opportunities to manage frustration. Because I know if your home is anything like mine, you do put a lot of thought into how do I just avoid those frustrating situations to make my day go a little bit smoother? But again, then we're not giving our child the opportunity to actually use that, that tool. Build that frustration tolerance. One great way to build frustration tolerance in a small way like that is to play games. Play board games with your kids, that are within kind of their zone of development, like matched to their skill level, but they might lose. That's an opportunity to practice your emotion regulation, your frustration tolerance. That's why we are always talking about play board games as a family. There are so many great executive functioning skills to be learned through that. A huge one of those being frustration tolerance and emotion regulation.

Lori: Yeah. And sometimes, you know, families will start with, like, let's play soccer as a team. And then they're really getting a lot of their first practices in front of tons of kids where they're overstimulated. It's better that they have some of that practice with you losing repeatedly and getting the practice of, how do I handle that before they're, like, in an actual game with lots of kids and having to do that on their own.

Mallory: Absolutely. And that kind of maps onto so many different areas of life, not just soccer.

Lori: Yeah. Okay. So this is another ADHD parenting challenge that we hear all the time from families. Danielle said, I'm trying to help my ADHD children be more independent, but

whenever I tell them to do their routine, like making a lunch or managing their hygiene, they immediately start fighting with me.

Katie: Okay. Yeah, another relatable question.

Lori: Very relatable.

Katie: I know. I feel like we're just getting called out, all of these. Going back to, why is this happening, right? So, if there's one kind of, like, takeaway, it's to just get really curious about what's going on with your child. And if we go back to executive functioning, it's really hard for kids with ADHD to see the future picture of what something will look like. So you might say you need to stop playing video games and go pack your lunch. And quite frankly, your child is totally not picturing themselves eating their lunch tomorrow. Or the alternative of, I show up to school and I don't have a lunch, right? Like, they're just not there. They're in the moment, they're playing a video game or doing something honestly just less boring than making a lunch, which as a person who packs most of the lunches, it's very boring to make lunches. So, when we can tie it into the future picture, it can really help. So, using the lunch example, you might say something like, hey, let's go pack lunch so you can choose what you want to eat tomorrow. And you're kind of tying it to that positive outcome. Like, they're going to make the lunch and then they're going to get, to some extent, some choices.

Although my daughter would pack three Hershey kisses and maybe like a fruit leather. That's the peak of nutrition. So I do have a little bit of say there. But I think the other piece too is if your child really isn't thinking about tomorrow at all, you can tie it to a much more immediate outcome. Hey, if we pack lunches really quickly, you're gonna have more time to go play outside right now. And sometimes you have to do that. You have to tie it back to a much more immediate, positive outcome for them because they're just not seeing the future picture. And so we are teaching them how to do that when we model it.

Mallory: Absolutely. And another thing to keep in mind when you're trying to help your child become more independent with their routines, is that where we think the challenge lies in the routine may not actually be what's challenging for our kids. So let's just take the bedtime routine, for example. Your child is requiring a ton of reminders, they're putting up a fight, it takes an hour, they're getting out of bed constantly. And the challenge maybe is not necessarily with brushing their teeth. Like, you could take any of these things in isolation, and you're like, my kid knows how to do it. Why do they put up such a fight? They know

how to shower independently. They know how to brush their teeth independently. What's the problem? They know how to do this. But it's kind of like we've been talking about is that it's probably those executive functions and a lot of cases that are interwoven throughout this routine, which is where the challenge lies. So it's not about brushing your teeth, but it's about stopping what you're doing and then initiating the new task. Or it's about, you know, have the self-monitoring realizing that you've been in the shower for 15 minutes when you're not even washing your hair today, it should only take five.

Katie: Or you brushed your teeth for, like, 14 seconds, and you're like, I'm sure it buzzed four times. The electric toothbrush has to buzz four times, and my kids will literally be in the bathroom for less than 20 seconds. I'm like, there's no way.

Lori: Yeah, yeah.

Mallory: So sometimes it's not so much about, like, those, discrete tasks. It's more about all of the executive functions that are woven throughout that task that is getting in the way of your child being fully independent with their routine. And we talk a lot about strategies that you can use to support your child's executive function during routines like that. Using timers, using visual reminders, or a visual schedule, you know, growing up to that full routine. So how do you break the routine down into smaller parts until your child can manage a longer routine? So there's a lot of different strategies that you can use. But the big point I'm trying to make here is that, like, surface level, where we think the challenges might not always be the case, it might actually be it might be a little bit deeper. You might have to do a little bit more digging to really figure out, like, where is the breakdown here? Why are we not independent with this routine?

Lori: Yep, all so helpful. Okay, so we have another question. We actually got this next question from several people. How do I help my child with structure and routine when I struggle with this as well, I possibly have ADHD, too.

Mallory: I hear this a lot.

Katie: We get this a lot. It's so true. And even in this time that I opened up a question box, we did get this same question or something similar about five times. So it really seems to us like our listeners fall into one of two camps. Okay. So either you yourself do not struggle with

executive functioning, and sometimes that might make it really hard for you to relate to your child with ADHD. But on the other hand, we have listeners who struggle significantly with executive functioning and because you struggle with executive functioning, you feel like you don't really know how to support your child with ADHD. So if you are in the second camp where you really feel like your own challenges just make it hard to support your child, first and foremost, know that you are not alone.

Mallory: Yeah, absolutely. And when you're a parent with ADHD, raising a child with ADHD, structure and routine, I mean, it can feel like the perfect storm. Like, neither of us can follow this routine and do this, but also a reframe for you, if you'll let me, is just that if you're a parent with ADHD parenting an ADHD child, you can really understand your child in a way that other parents maybe can't. Like you on a deeper level, understand what's going on in your child's brain and why some of these things are challenging. So just wanted to add that in as like, it's possible. We know it's challenging, but also you can understand your child on a deeper level and there's benefit to that.

Katie: Absolutely. And something that I've really had to implement for myself is keeping more reasonable expectations of myself. So as a parent, I can have days where I am really good at anticipating my kid's needs. I have the dance bag packed, I have the snacks that each kid really likes. I have the water bottles, I have all the things. And then there are days when I really do struggle to have all those pieces pulled together. And what I can sometimes beat myself up about is I'm like, well, what's so different about today? Like, why am I struggling, there must be something wrong with me. And so giving myself a lot of grace to realize, like, just like my kids, I have great days, I have tired days. I'm allowed, I'm allowed to have those days and so are you. And I think that's a huge part of ADHD is some of that inconsistency, that motivation can really ebb and flow. There's going to be days when you feel like you're just going to do all the things on the to do list, and then there's going to be days where it really feels so overwhelming. And that's just part of the diagnosis and learning to manage it. Part of that is adjusting your expectations.

Lori: Yeah, and I think we talk about this, too, that it's hard to support your child and help your child if you yourself haven't gotten that same support and help and treatment for yourself. And the research also really backs this up, that if you have not had that treatment yourself and you have not had the help, it's really going to be very hard to parent a child with

ADHD. So really, sometimes before jumping into doing things to shift stuff for your child, it might feel selfish, but it really isn't to take some time for yourself to focus on therapy for you and getting the tools that you need to regulate your emotions. Getting the tools that you need to stay organized, getting medication so that you can, again, not be as dysregulated or to focus better and, again, that's going to help you to then be able to help your child. So, you know, again, it's not selfish to do those things and take those times for yourself. And I think also, you know, if you have a partner, and I know not everyone does, but if you have family members, there are going to be days when, you know, I feel like this last week I had just back-to-back appointments. I had a really hard situation at work and it was like, I was just so came home escalated. And, then my kids were, I had five tantrums in a row over stuff and I was just like, I told my husband, like, you're going to have to take over because I just can't do it. Like, I'm going to be not, I'm going to make this situation worse if I'm doing this.

Sometimes it's helped us do marriage therapy to think about how can we communicate better with each other when we're really full emotionally and we can't handle those situations so that they can take over parts of that, or even enlist certain family members to kind of help support us through days that are hard or times that are hard in particular and that's really important.

Amy from activated ADHD has some amazing resources here. She has a family, they're all neurodivergent, and she really works with families to help find strategies and resources that work for everyone in the family that's kind of struggling with this and how to make it more manageable for you. Yes, it's hard, but it is doable with the right strategies.

Mallory: Yeah. And we can link Amy's episode in the show notes.

Katie: Yeah, she's actually been on twice and it's been amazing. And one of the things that really struck me in her last interview was I was asking, okay, she was talking about routines and schedules, and I said, well, how do you use those with your kids? And she said, actually, at this point, I'm actually almost entirely focused on myself. Because when I, as the mom, can keep it together and make systems that work for my brain and be successful, it really changes the outcome for my kids. And what she was describing was she's working on these things and now she's slowly starting to implement some of the things with her children, but she's been really focused on herself. And honestly, that was not the answer I was expecting to hear, but it makes sense and it's what's really worked for her as an ADHD parent. And so, yeah, we can definitely link her resources. That's another great resource.

Lori: Yeah. I would say, like, we, you know, we have our printable routines and we have one for afternoon. That was a hard situation for my family, was afternoons just feeling kind of chaotic. And we sat down, we made those schedules. And I have to say, it's, like, helpful for me because I don't then have to think about what am I doing with my child. I honestly reference their schedule. So those schedules that we create are also, like, good checks and reminders for us so that we don't forget those things, too. I mean, it's honestly beneficial for us as parents and for kids.

Katie: Yes. Unpack your lunchbox has been a game changer because it, was getting real bad. Like, it would sit over the weekend and I wouldn't remember. And I'm like, oh, it says we have to unpack lunchboxes and water bottles. Good thing. Alrighty. Well, so that actually wraps up our very first audience Q & A. if this was helpful to you, can you please consider leaving us a review on Apple or Spotify, wherever you podcast. Reviews are just so critical in helping us reach more ADHD families. And thank you so much for all of these great questions. As always, we are here to support.

Katie: Thanks for listening to Shining with ADHD by your hosts, Lori, Katie, and Mallory of The Childhood Collective.

Mallory: If you enjoyed this episode, please leave us a review and hit subscribe so you can be the first to know when a new episode airs.

Lori: If you are looking for links and resources mentioned in this episode, you can always find those in the show notes. See you next time!