

About The Systems Parents Need

OVERVIEW: Parents, your child learns and reflects the behavior that you model. In order to help your child develop **self-awareness** and **self-regulation** (Executive Functioning), you must be able to model these skills to them. Below are list of important systems that parents can develop and maintain in order to create healthy communication, more functional routines, and an overall higher quality relationship with their child.

- 1. Emotional Regulation** - Developing emotional tolerance for your child and the ability to regulate your emotions is critical to helping your child learn the same. There is a big difference between unconsciously reacting VS consciously responding to your child's behavior. Focus on holding an emotionally safe space for your child so they feel safe, heard, seen, and understood rather than judged or shamed.
- 2. Planning** - Planning is a complex skill that helps parents juggle their responsibilities and make time for what's MOST important - quality time with their family. Parents need a reliable system to help them manage their time and their tasks so that you do not feel overwhelmed.
- 3. Organization** - Adults/children with AD/HD or executive function issues have trouble managing details. It's best to have fewer items to keep track of and to find functional homes where your/your child's most essential items can be stored for easy/fast access and cleanup. The less stuff you have, the less stuff you have to manage.
- 4. Flexible Thinking** - When you can go with the flow and figure out creative solutions to everyday mishaps or problems, then you can drastically reduce unnecessary stress. Being able to think and visualize something from multiple perspectives, deal with setbacks, and have a plan B or C are all vital flexible thinking skills.
- 5. Communication** - Effective communication is measured by how often you are able to achieve your desired outcome. Arguing, nagging, or bribing to get your child to listen teaches your child to do the same. Communicating your expectations assertively and listening to understand (instead of to reply) is a much more effective approach to communication.
- 6. Quality Time** - This is the most important goal for parents. Having a high quality relationship with your child means they will be more likely to come to you when they are facing challenges - now and in the future. As a general guideline, you want to have three positive interactions to each one they perceive as negative.
- 7. Self Care** - Before parents can meet their child's needs, they must first meet their own needs. Taking care of yourself emotionally, mentally, and physically ensures that you have the energy and capacity to meet your child's needs.

Parent Systems Self-Assessment

Date ___/___/___ Name _____

GUIDELINES: Circle the comment that is most like you. For each section, you may strategize ways to get to the next number. For example, if you have a 2 in planning, what would get you to a number 3? Or, you can overhaul each of your systems to get to a 4 in every area. Just be realistic with yourself, this will help you a lot.

NOTE: There is NO shame in any of these answers. That’s not the point. The objective is to gain clarity on key areas that many parents struggle with so you can learn how to turn things around.

	1 – Nope!	2 – I’ve got work to do.	3 – Good enough!	4 – I’ve got this!
EMOTIONAL REGULATION	I have zero tolerance for disrespectful behavior. I have a short fuse, frequently lose my temper, and argue/raise my voice with my child.	My child can easily push my buttons and I react emotionally when they act inappropriately. I find it difficult to stay calm and when my child is distressed.	There are times when my child pushes my buttons, but I am able to use tools that help me stay calm more often than not.	I am emotionally regulated most of the time. I am able to soothe my child and help them to calm down when they are anxious, or distressed.
PLANNING	I rely too much on my memory and don’t have a reliable planning system to manage my time or tasks; managing my family feels overwhelming.	I write a few things down when I remember to, but I mostly rely on memory to manage my time and tasks. I’m often rushing or late/ miss deadlines.	I have a somewhat reliable system that helps me manage my time and tasks. I use it most of the time and it works pretty well for me.	I have a very reliable system (planner/calendar/alerts) that helps me effectively manage my time and tasks. I maintain it consistently and it works pretty flawlessly.
ORGANIZATION	I am extremely disorganized and each room of the house is cluttered. I/my kids often misplace or lose important items.	I sort of have a system for organizing, but I/my kids do not maintain it. We have too many things to manage and they tend to pile up.	I have a pretty reliable system of organization that I use most of the time. I try to get rid of stuff we don’t really need.	I have a reliable system of organization that I maintain consistently. We keep a minimal amount of stuff.

<p>FLEXIBLE THINKING/ PROBLEM SOLVING</p>	<p>I often overreact when things don't go my way. I need to have control of my environment in order for me to feel calm/ happy.</p>	<p>I feel disappointed when something doesn't go the way I planned it. It's difficult for me to problem-solve in the moment.</p>	<p>I can usually keep a positive attitude and adapt to the situation when something doesn't work out the way I planned it.</p>	<p>I often have a plan B or C just in case plans fall through. I can easily go with the flow and problem-solve in the moment when things don't go my way.</p>
<p>COMMUNICATION</p>	<p>My child and I do not have an effective system of communication. We avoid difficult or uncomfortable conversations.</p>	<p>I often argue with my child, raise my voice, lecture, or nag them to get them to listen. They rarely respect or follow through with requests.</p>	<p>My child and I are able to speak to each other calmly. They follow through with my requests more often than not.</p>	<p>My child and I are able to speak calmly and have a two-way dialogue, even about difficult or uncomfortable topics. They consistently follow through with requests.</p>
<p>QUALITY TIME/ BONDING</p>	<p>My child and I do not spend quality time connecting together. When we do connect, our interactions are mostly negative.</p>	<p>My child and I do not enjoy each other's company. Our interactions are more often negative than positive.</p>	<p>My child and I enjoy each other's company most of the time. Our interactions are more often positive than negative.</p>	<p>My child looks forward to spending quality time together. They feel free to express themselves openly with me.</p>
<p>SELF CARE</p>	<p>I often feel overwhelmed or anxious and I find it impossible to make time for myself, my hobbies, or my needs.</p>	<p>I have a list of stuff I would like to do/ need to do to take better care of myself, but I keep putting it off.</p>	<p>I have a somewhat reliable system for taking care of my needs and I make time for self-care and my hobbies.</p>	<p>I have lots of reliable resources that help me take care of myself (therapy, yoga, meditation, hobbies, friends, support group).</p>
<p>OTHER?</p>				