

STUDY TIPS : FLEXIBILITY

How does your child react when things don't go according to plan? Are they able to accept these changes and carry on with a new plan? Or, do they tend to get "stuck" on needing things to be a certain way? (e.g., to problem solve or attempt tasks)

Flexibility is the ability to adapt to new circumstances and find new ways to achieve goals/solve problems.

Below are some strategies for how you can help your child build their flexibility skills:

- ✘ Demonstrate how to talk through a problem or adjust to changes in plans. Show your child how to brainstorm a range of ideas before deciding to try something.
- ✘ Encourage your child to use talk-aloud strategies when faced with a new problem. For example, ask your child to ask themselves questions like:
"Do I know more than one way to solve the problem?"
"Does this look similar to anything I have seen before?"
"Is this problem the same or different to the problem before this?"
- ✘ Where possible, avoid or minimise changes in routine/plans. When change is inevitable, prepare your child well in advance for the upcoming change (e.g., exposing them to the information about the change, coaching them through options for how to adapt to upcoming changes, practicing how to adapt to these changes).
- ✘ A consistent and predictable routine is important for minimising upsets and frustrations caused by changes.
- ✘ Teach your child emotional regulation and coping strategies such as deep breathing or re-framing change as "different" rather than "bad/negative".
- ✘ Acknowledge your child's feelings of anger, upset, or frustration when changes occur. Encourage your child to use their emotional regulation strategies as a means of problem solving (i.e., needing to be calm to think at their best).
- ✘ Incorporate your child's interests when teaching them how to brainstorm ideas and connect ideas across different topics. Often, motivation plays an important role in people's willingness to try new things/something different.