

Organizational Strategies for Everyone

Lora Johnson
Mallory Grimes
Claire Lanham

Questions to Answer

What is Executive Functioning?

How do *executive functioning deficits* impact **student organization** in the classroom?

How can you support your student's organizational needs at home?

What is Executive Functioning?

What is Executive Functioning?

General components of executive function that impact school performance:

- **Working memory and recall:** holding facts in mind while manipulating information; accessing facts stored in long-term memory; includes an impaired sense of time.
- **Activation, arousal, and effort:** getting started; paying attention; finishing work.
- **Controlling Emotions:** ability to tolerate frustration; thinking before acting or speaking.
- **Internalizing language:** using “self-talk” to control one’s behavior and direct future actions.
- **Taking an issue apart, analyzing the pieces, reconstituting and organizing it into new ideas:** complex problem solving.
- **Shifting, inhibiting:** changing activities, stopping existing activity, stopping and thinking before acting or speaking.
- **Organizing/planning ahead:** organizing time, projects, materials, and possessions.
- **Monitoring:** self-monitoring and prompting.

Two Categories of Executive Functions

The practical impact of executive function deficits in *two* general categories:

- **Academic challenges**

- writing essays
- remembering what is read (comprehension)
- memorizing information
- completing complex math

- **Work study skills and habits**

- organization,
- getting started on and finishing work,
- remembering tasks and due dates,
- completing homework and long-term projects in a timely manner,
- processing information in an efficient and timely manner,
- having good time awareness and management,
- using self-talk to direct behavior
- planning ahead for the future.

Executive Functioning Challenges on a Daily Basis

©Pathway 2 Success · www.thepathway2success.com

"I'm trying to pay attention but I just can't right now."

"I want to start but I have no clue how to."

"I am trying to listen but all I can think about is gym class coming up."

"I'm late again. I just can't keep track of the time."

"This is too hard. I should just give up."

"I did my homework but I can't find it."



"What did the teacher say? She's going too fast for me."

"Homework? I didn't even know there was any."

"A product due in two weeks? I can't think ahead that far."

"I know I shouldn't shout out but I just wanted to say something."

"Where did I put my pencil? I just had it."

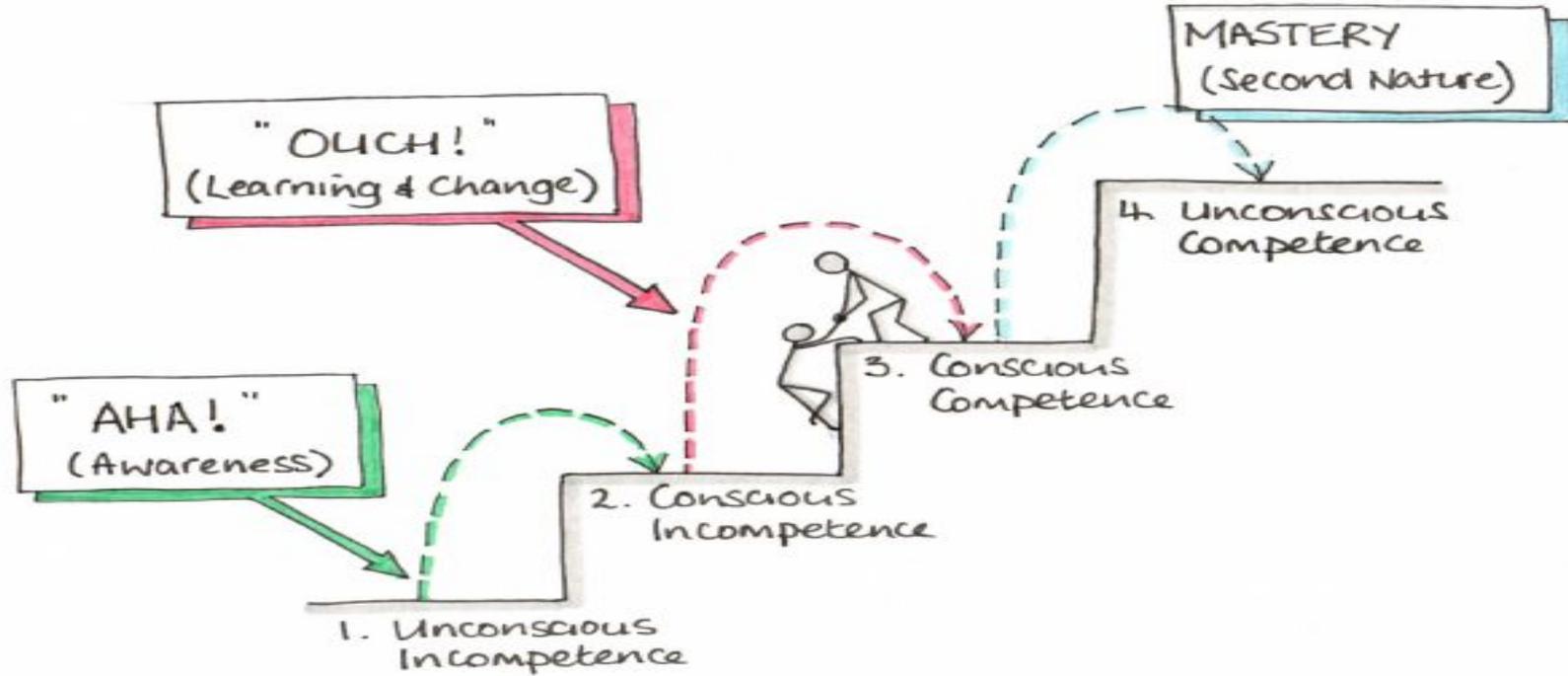
"I lost my paper again."

www.thepathway2success.com

Clipart by Whimsy Workshop
Teaching & Teacher Karma

Interactive Example

Associative vs. Cognitive Tasks



Categorizing Information - Stroop Test

The Stroop Test

Categorizing Information



How are Organizational Strategies Supported Within the Classroom?

Classroom Examples

- Classroom Organization
- Routines within Classroom
 - While providing structure and routine, also important to build in opportunity for meaningful experiences to practice flexibility.
- Take the guesswork out of learning behaviors in academic settings
- Breaking down long-term assignments
- Visuals paired with words when needed, as appropriate for each students reading level

Classroom Examples

Friday April 6, 2018

What to take out:

- * Sharpened Pencil
- * Calculator
- * Last Night's HW

Daily Learning Objective:

I can determine the area of a triangle.

Homework:

HAPPY WEEKEND!

Agenda:

- Check HW
- Graded Warm Up**
- Finding Area of a Triangle
- Classwork Practice

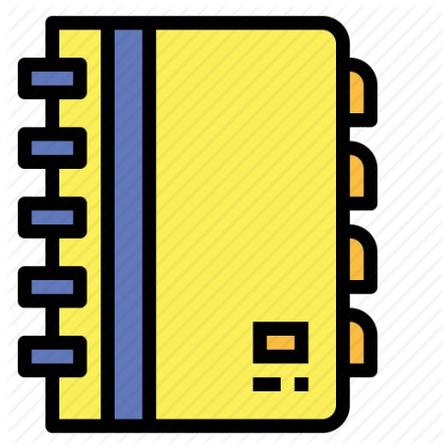
Executive Functioning can be addressed in a variety of ways:

- Discretely addressed within a resource setting
- Supports embedded within academic courses
- Each student's individual needs and schedule will impact how and when executive functioning skills are addressed

Working Memory Challenges



Try Different Systems: Homework



Homework Log

For the week of _____ to _____

Student Name: _____ Subject: _____

Day	Assignments	Teacher Signature/Comments	Parent Signature/Comments
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			

Try Different Systems: Material Organization



Transition to the Workforce

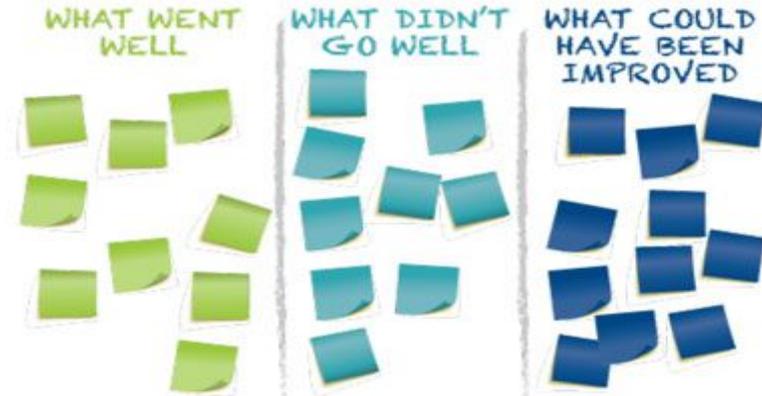
Organization App - Google Calendar



Planning - 30/30



One earbud in one out



How Can My Student's IEP Address Their Executive Functioning Deficit?

Set Up for Success - A well-aligned IEP

- Gather Data
 - Teacher reports
 - Emails
 - Grade reports (Parent Portal)
- Categorize Information
 - Highlight
 - Take notes

All parts of the IEP should “talk to each other”

How Can I Help My Student at Home?

Developmental Milestones

Consider your child's developmental level – different expectations for different ages

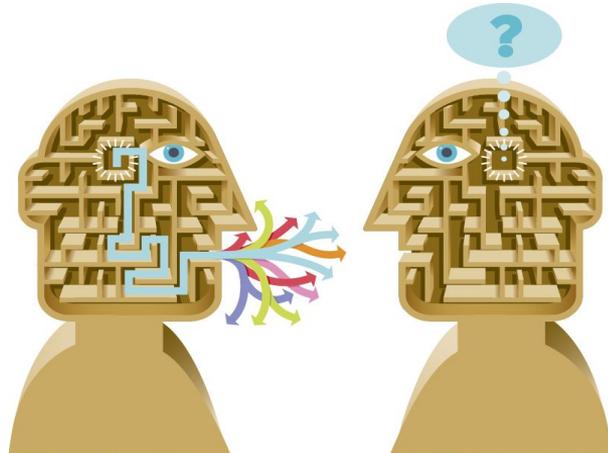
Keep in mind reasonable expectations for your student's age level

Example: By the end of 8th grade, students should be maintaining an organized binder independently.



Model Executive Function Language

- What's your **plan**? Let's work on a plan together.
- Can I **help you get started** on your Science worksheet?
- This looks like a big project. Let's **break it down** together.
- Which assignment is **most important** to start with today?



Specific Compliments to Praise Effort

Example: “I love the way you worked through that tough problem!”

Non-example: “You’re so good at math!”

Example: “I appreciate the way you paid attention to the story. It really shows in the paragraph you wrote.”

Non-example: “You are smart!”



What did you learn today?
What mistake did you make
that taught you something?
What did you try hard at
today?

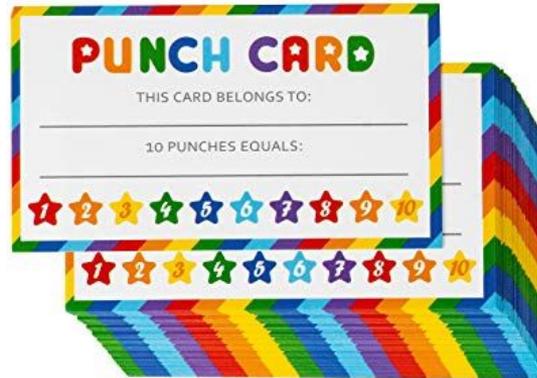
Carol Dweck

EverydayPowerBlog.com

Use Incentives

- Reserve incentives for the most important skills.
- Make sure the incentive is of value to your student.

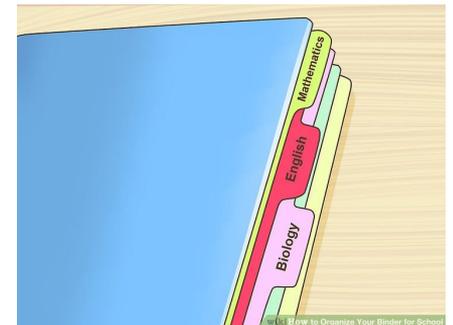
Example: *A student writes down their homework every day in each class. At the end of the week, the student earns a meaningful reward from home.*



Binder / Material Organization: Twice a Week

Make a set day and time **twice a week** to go through your student's binder and materials. Make sure that they are apart of the process. Over time, you can fade your support and have them take charge over what they need to be successful.

You can keep a few file folders at home for materials or work that you want your student to keep as a reference. This way, it doesn't stay in the binder and cause disorganization.



Prioritize Homework / Projects

Number the assignments in order of priority based on:

- Due date
- Time you need to complete it
- Subject difficulty
- Need for additional support

Other Tips:

- ★ Set a goal deadline for each assignment
- ★ Break assignments into chunks
- ★ Set a timer and take breaks
- ★ Have a study area and materials ready
- ★ Ask for help when you need it

Priorities

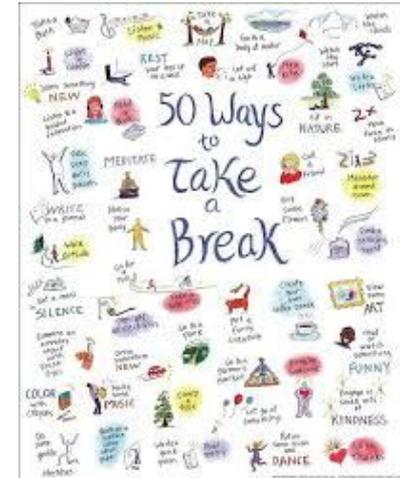
- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



Have your student rank the assignments based on priority (1-5; 1 being the top; 5 being an assignment that isn't due for a while)

Coping Strategies

- Provide meditation techniques to help improve self-control
- Teach positive self-talk and model it
 - Encourage your student to use it during an especially tough assignment
- Help your student
- Encourage collaborative problem solving
 - *What should you work on first?*



Work Habit Reflection

- I was focused and worked to the best of my ability.
- I listened and followed directions.
- I participated in class discussions and any group work well.
- I understood what was being taught or asked questions if I did not.
- I can explain what I learned and apply it.
- I respected the learning of others during instruction.
- I completed the assignment I was given.



Check Grades

- Check grades **with** your student, not **for** your student.
- If there is a missing assignment or grade to be improved, create a list with your student.
 - First, remind your student to email or speak with that specific teacher about the assignment.
 - For the first few times, let the teacher know that your student has an assignment to speak to them about. Gradually, fade your emails so that your student is executing the plan on their own.



Provide Checklists

<i>Ask yourself...</i>	<i>Check</i>
Is my first and last name on it?	
Did I follow all of the directions?	
Did I double check for any spelling, punctuation, or grammar mistakes?	
Is there anything I can improve on?	
Did I complete the bare minimum, what was asked, or did I go above and beyond?	
Can I proudly say this is my best effort?	



Prioritize Focus



- Your student may have various executive functioning needs, however, it is important to prioritize the focus
- When choosing the most important skill to focus on, ask yourself: *What is impacting my child the most on a daily basis?*
 - **Example:** My student needs to work on organizing their homework folder, beginning their assignments independently, and controlling their emotions when something doesn't go their way
 - *Which skill should be prioritized?*
- Overloading your student with too many skills to work on does not lead to lasting results
 - Ultimately, it leaves everyone frustrated

Avoid Over-Programming

Notes 555-4475 "Daddy is like an expired teenager"

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
SWAN LAKE Callie Chloe Alex Cassidy Cassidy Cassidy Cassidy	7 Eli's Graduation 5-8:30 Den's Day 3:00 drop off [SWAN LAKE] 4:00	OUTDOOR FIELD DAY S.W.M. 12 Calli Gene 12:00 SWIM 19 LAST 26 ITALY at MILWAUKEE	Girl's B-day (M) 444 4742	1 MET TRANSITION 1/15-2/15 MATE Spelling Bee C.F. (9:00) 8 15 BASEBALL in the PARK 11:00 am @	2 Soccer 3 9 16 STUDIO 5:30 30 7:00	3 LUCAS BASEBALL FEST LULLCONS - 3-7 10 NO PRANO 11:00 CRAB PARTY 5:00 24 BASEBALL 11:00

Handwritten notes and sticky notes on the calendar:

- Left side:** "I love you! MOMO", "LOVE SOFIA", "Smith Gallery Show"
- Bottom center:** "Tues/Wed MC cutting 10:30", "OPEN SAV. BANK ACCT. for SOFIA - B-day"
- Bottom right:** "T-TOP pedicure 2:30-3:30"

Model the Behavior Yourself



Question & Answer

References

“Understanding Executive Functions and Interventions” Power Point Presentation by: David W. Holdefer, M.A., CAS, NCSP

“Smart but Scattered” By Peg Dawson