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**Building Executive Function Skills: Chris, 11-Year-Old 5th Grader**

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Chris is an 11-year-old fifth grader. His parents and teachers describe him as an enthusiastic and energetic young boy who is friendly and generally well liked by his peers. He also enjoys karate and swimming. Chris has always struggled in the classroom. Last year he was referred for a neuropsychological and educational evaluation, but the results indicated that he did not meet the criteria for the diagnosis of a learning disability or ADHD. According to reports from Chris's teachers, his performance has never matched his potential. His parents have always had a difficult time getting him to start assignments and complete his homework on time.

Similarly, he has often completed long-term projects at the last minute or turned them in late. Chris often forgets to bring his books to school and appears disheveled when entering the classroom; when he does have his materials with him, they are usually scattered in his backpack. His teacher reports that Chris often spends more time looking for his assignment than actually working on them. He generally responds correctly to questions about specific details but has difficulty with problems related to the main ideas and significant themes. His writing is often a stream of thoughts without a definitive beginning or conclusive ending. Despite his parent's best efforts, Chris put off studying for his most recent vocabulary test and received a failing grade.

During the past year, Chris's parents have hired an educational therapist to help Chris with his reading and writing. The therapist found at first that Chris had difficulty remembering and applying strategies for individual assignments. Also, Chris was initially reluctant to try out some of the new strategies she suggested.

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Executive Function Weaknesses	Math - Writing - Comprehension Difficulties	Recommended Strategies
Planning/Prioritizing		
Organizing		
Using Working Memory		
Shifting		
Self-monitoring and Self-checking		

**Building Executive Function Skills: Lucy, 15-Year-Old 10th Grader**

Lucy is a highly motivated 10th grader diagnosed with ADHD and a learning disability, which are reflected in her poor math performance. She has had difficulties retaining math concepts, as well as classroom procedures and instructions. Over the years, she has benefited from multiple exposures to information as well as many opportunities for practice. Because of her difficulties, Lucy has needed individual math support on an after-school basis. When she has put forth the effort, Lucy has been able to learn many math concepts and operations in isolation. However, she has felt overwhelmed when tasks have required her to integrate and apply concepts to more complex problems. Attentional weaknesses have also made it difficult for her to access her knowledge and to self-monitor, so she has always made “careless” mistakes.

Executive Function Weaknesses	Math - Writing - Comprehension Difficulties	Recommended Strategies
Planning/Prioritizing		
Organizing		
Using Working Memory		
Shifting		
Self-monitoring and Self-checking		

**Building Executive Function Skills: David, 17-Year-Old 12th Grader**

David is an outgoing high school senior with no diagnosed learning or attention difficulties. He performed well in elementary and middle school; however, the increase in complexity and volume of his academic workload has exposed weaknesses in his executive function processes, especially organization and planning. During the past year, he has had particular difficulty staying focused on required classes that are not inherently interesting to him. His notes on lectures and readings have been disorganized, and he has also lacked a consistent method of studying for his exams. When studying, he has been staying up late the night before an exam, spending many hours rereading his textbook and looking over his notes. As a result, his grades over the past year have fluctuated from A's to D's. Due to his procrastination and difficulty with initiating tasks, he has also turned in many of his papers late this year.

Executive Function Weaknesses	Math - Writing - Comprehension Difficulties	Recommended Strategies
Planning/Prioritizing		
Organizing		
Using Working Memory		
Shifting		
Self-monitoring and Self-checking		

**Building Executive Function Skills: Jenny, 13-Year-Old 7th Grader**

Jenny is an extremely social seventh grader with above-average verbal reasoning and language abilities. She is an active class participant who does especially well with collaborative and hands-on projects in her classes. However, her academic performance has been inconsistent. Last year Jenny was diagnosed with ADHD and visual–spatial difficulties. Her executive function weaknesses and her inattention have influenced her school performance in several ways. She has struggled with multistep problems in math and has had difficulty keeping track of what she reads. She has also struggled to take notes in class. She has had difficulty remembering important information in science, geography, and history. In addition, Jenny has been highly distractible in class, and her attention has wavered. As a result, she has performed poorly on tests, and her grades have often not reflected her ability or knowledge level. When confronted with assignments that have required her to plan ahead in a step-by-step manner (e.g., multistep projects, research papers), she has had difficulty breaking down tasks into small steps and following the projects through to completion. Because Jenny has found many school situations overwhelming and frustrating, she has often procrastinated with her schoolwork and has preferred spending time with friends instead. Jenny’s difficulties with organization have also compromised her ability to keep track of her materials, and she has often lost her handouts and homework. Jenny’s parents have acknowledged her struggle with attention and organization, and they recognize the adverse impact this struggle has had on Jenny’s school performance.

Executive Function Weaknesses	Math - Writing - Comprehension Difficulties	Recommended Strategies
Planning/Prioritizing		
Organizing		
Using Working Memory		
Shifting		
Self-monitoring and Self-checking		