

Helping Kids with Executive Functioning Issues Manage Behavior

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Companion Notes

Slide 2: Gift of the Breath

- Pause - Breath - Settling in

Slide 3: Witness Growth and Development

- Children develop through the lifespan
- Brain development recognizes the stimulus in the environment
- Difference between weakness and a disability - a disability according to the ADA is a physiological or psychological brain disorder diagnosed by psychometric instruments

Slide 4: Integrated Perspective of EF Skills

- Prefrontal cortex has been identified mainly responsible for EF
- But it does not act alone - it's integrated network beginning from the brain stem, to the limbic system in charge of the emotional reactions -
- Important to feel safe before engaging in more complex behaviors such as planning, self-regulating, and self-monitoring

Slide 5: Executive Function Skills develop over time

- Can be learned - these are not dependent on the genetic composition rather these are learned behaviors
- Brain research shows that the brain is plastic and continues to develop
- Studies on epigenetics show that the brain generates neurons especially when engaging in aerobic exercise
- EF abilities change over the life course - throughout adolescence and through early adulthood
- Can be trained by exposure, modeling, and cueing systems

Slide 6: Executive Function Processes Defined from Classroom and Schools perspective

1. Goal Setting
2. Cognitive Flexibility / Shifting
3. Prioritizing and Organizing
4. Accessing Working Memory
5. Self-Monitoring

Slide 7: Development of the "upstairs brain" takes time

Slide 8: Dan Siegel talks about the hand model of the brain

- Importance of this model from a network capacities perspective
- Brain's evolution with the latest being the development of the prefrontal cortex - it is the first to go offline with there the brain goes through flight, fight, fear.

Slide 13: Science of Attunement - Cassidy & Shaver, 2008; Norcross, 2002; Siegel, 200a

- PART - Presence, Attunement, Resonance, Trust

Slide 14: Presence

- Give that individual our full attention
- Receive that person's communication without judgment and with curiosity
- "Feeling Felt" as if our mind is seen clearly by the other

- Without this, no intervention can be successful

Slide 15: Attunement

- Open to our internal sense and simultaneously open to the internal world of others
- Connect Interpersonally - attunement - focusing of communication - verbal and non-verbal
- Engage actively - tracking another's signal
- Become a part of their interpersonal experience

Slide 16: Resonance

- Outcome of attunement and presence
- Interpersonal state of joining as a "we"
- Communicates a deep sense of belonging
- Fulfills the neural need for connection that is the hallmark of our deeply social nature

Slide 17: Trust

- Activates "social engagement system" describes the neural mechanism of being "receptive" (Porges, S. 2011)
- Openness to receiving input - muscles of the face, eardrums, and voice box relax
- Brain evaluates and determines that interaction is safe and that we can let that person in

Slide 18: Cultivating the skills in PART

Slide 19 - 20: Reframing Scripts

- Develops new habits - needs pause time - needs practice

Slide 21: Dyad Activity (see handout)

Slide 22: Strategies for Self-Monitoring & Self-Regulation

Slide 23: Goal Setting, Planning and Prioritizing - Figure 3.12 (Research ILD)

- Basic skills for cultivating executive function skills
- Use Goals, Aspirations, Negotiation Worksheet
- Help your student to understand the relative important of the task
- Help with predicting time to completion

Slide 24: Teach: Obligation, aspiration, or negotiation? Have to do? Wanna do? Or trade?

- Block off times
- Insert the obligation tasks - use a different color to visually emphasize the importance
- Find times for aspiration tasks
- Insert negotiation activities in any available slots
- Use the extra column to check off tasks when they have been completed. Reschedule tasks that have not been completed.

Slide 25: Scheduling Tasks - using Visual Reminders

- Transfer the prioritized tasks into the bigger picture of a whole day by using a daily schedule

Slide 26: Emotional Regulation - Key to EF Success

5 Primary Reasons:

1. Attention, Memory, and Learning
2. Decision Making
3. Relationship Quality
4. Mental Health - anxiety, depression

Slide 27-28: Mood Meter

Slide 29: Strategies and tools from Yale's Center for Intelligence

- Mood Meter - Name it to tame it!
- Meta Moment - Best Self- creating an image of your best self
- Explicit use of regulation of emotion - positive self-talk / positive reappraisal

Slide 30: Family Journey

- Parents partner with schools and teachers

Developmental Tasks through the ages (Dawson & Guare, 2014)

TABLE 1.1. Developmental Tasks Requiring Executive Skills

Age range	Developmental task
Preschool	Run simple errands (e.g., "Get your shoes from the bedroom"). Tidy bedroom or playroom with assistance. Perform simple chores and self-help tasks with reminders (e.g., clear dishes from table, brush teeth, get dressed). Inhibit behaviors: don't touch a hot stove, run into the street, grab a toy from another child, hit, bite, push, etc.
Kindergarten– grade 2	Run errands (two- to three-step directions). Tidy bedroom or playroom. Perform simple chores, self-help tasks; may need reminders (e.g., make bed). Bring papers to and from school. Complete homework assignments (20 minutes maximum). Decide how to spend money (allowance). Inhibit behaviors: follow safety rules, don't swear, raise hand before speaking in class, keep hands to self.
Grades 3–5	Run errands (may involve time delay or greater distance, such as going to a nearby store or remembering to do something after school). Tidy bedroom or playroom (may include vacuuming, dusting, etc.). Perform chores that take 15–30 minutes (e.g., clean up after dinner, rake leaves). Bring books, papers, assignments to and from school. Keep track of belongings when away from home. Complete homework assignments (1 hour maximum). Plan simple school project such as book report (select book, read book, write report). Keep track of changing daily schedule (i.e., different activities after school). Save money for desired objects, plan how to earn money. Inhibit/self-regulate: behave when teacher is out of the classroom; refrain from rude comments, temper tantrums, bad manners.
Grades 6–8	Help out with chores around the home, including both daily responsibilities and occasional tasks (e.g., emptying dishwasher, raking leaves, shoveling snow); tasks may take 60–90 minutes to complete. Babysit younger siblings or for pay. Use system for organizing schoolwork; including assignment book, notebooks, etc. Follow complex school schedule involving changing teachers and changing schedules. Plan and carry out long-term projects, including tasks to be accomplished and reasonable timeline to follow; may require planning multiple large projects simultaneously. Plan time, including after-school activities, homework, family responsibilities; estimate how long it takes to complete individual tasks and adjust schedule to fit. Inhibit rule breaking in the absence of visible authority.

Activity 1: Partner Activity - Practicing Re-framing Scripts and PART

Directions:

1. Select a partner - Person whose birthday is earlier in the year, go first.

5 Executive Function Processes

1. Goal Setting
2. Cognitive Flexibility / Shifting
3. Prioritizing and Organizing
4. Accessing Working Memory
5. Self-Monitoring

(2 minutes) Thinking Sheet: Think of a situation that you are having with your child, one that can be categorized under 1 of the 5 EF Skills.

Challenge Situation: Describe in detail	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe the challenge task, where it occurs, time it occurs, if it involves other people, trigger stimulus	
Think to how you react to this situation:	
Write down the dialogue / scripts you've used.	Write out re-framed scripts

Partner #1: (2 minutes)

1. Describe the situation to your partner, without naming the EF skill.
2. Describe how you've interacted with your student to build the deficit skill.
3. Think of the scripts you've used to talk to your student about the skill. Share that with your partner.

Partner #2: (2 minutes)

1. Your task is to apply the skills of PART - presence, attunement, resonance, trust
2. Listen. Acknowledge their situation by (1) communicating a similar situation you've experienced; (2) ask clarifying questions; (3) offer a solution based on your experience
3. Your task is to label the EF skill at hand.
4. Together with your partner develop Reframing Scripts that can build PART skills

A. Principles of Effective Strategy Instruction

TABLE 2.1. Principles of Effective Strategy Instruction

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- Strategy instruction should be directly linked with the curriculum.
 - Strategies should be taught in a structured, systematic way, using scaffolding and modeling.
 - Metacognitive awareness should be taught explicitly so that students develop an understanding of their profiles of strengths and weaknesses.
 - Students’ motivation and self-understanding should be addressed, to ensure that they generalize their use of strategies.
 - Strategy instruction should address students’ individual learning styles, motivation, and willingness to work hard—all critical for building the cycle of academic success.
 - Hard work and effort should be encouraged and rewarded, as students initially need to work extremely hard to learn and use new strategies. Determination, persistence, and resilience are important, so that they do not feel overwhelmed by this initial effort.
 - Time should be provided for practicing and applying strategies.
 - Opportunities should be provided for students to extend and generalize strategies to a range of different tasks.
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B. Developmental Progression and strategies for organization

TABLE 2.4. Embedding Executive Function Processes and Strategies across Curriculum Areas

Curriculum area	Executive function processes involved	Strategies
Reading comprehension	<i>Planning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use monthly calendars to plan and break down the reading of longer texts.
	<i>Prioritizing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students use active reading strategies that ask them to look for and mark specific aspects of the text (characters, setting, themes, etc.).
	<i>Organizing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require students to use Post-it notes to summarize each chapter of a novel.
	<i>Organizing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students use story organizers to summarize stories for book reports.
	<i>Shifting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students predict different endings to a story.
Written language	<i>Planning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require students to plan long-term writing assignments by using monthly and weekly calendars and setting short-term “due dates” for themselves.
	<i>Prioritizing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students use graphic organizers for brainstorming, prioritizing, and organizing ideas.
	<i>Organizing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide templates or specific guidelines for writing thesis statements, introductions, body paragraphs, and conclusions.
	<i>Self-checking</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help students develop personalized editing checklists based on previous assignments. Provide a specific rubric for students to check their work.
	<i>Shifting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize how to shift from the main ideas to supporting details when writing.
Studying and test taking	<i>Planning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students plan their study schedule for upcoming tests.
	<i>Organizing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students take notes from the textbook in a question–answer or Triple Note Tote format for later use as a study tool.
	<i>Shifting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach students to rephrase topic sentences as questions, and to use context clues to understand ambiguities and to interpret questions.
	<i>Memorizing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When requiring students to take notes and to study history or biology, teach them to develop their own acronyms or crazy phrases to help them to retrieve and manipulate the information.
	<i>Self-checking</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow students to bring personalized checklists to tests, to remind them to check for their own common errors.
