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Autism Agenda



Linn Benton Lincoln ESD-Cascade Regional Autism Program

Executive function: what is it, and how do we support it in those with autism? Part I

By. Maureen Bennie March 19, 2018

Executive function is a term that is widely used in autism circles to describe a broad array of skills that have to do with an individual's cognitive function. Some sources say that up to 80% of those with autism suffer from executive function disorder, leading to difficulties managing time, completing tasks, and making what for many of us would be simple tasks – like cleaning our rooms – very complicated or seemingly impossible.

For some people with ASD, social and communication difficulties are not the primary issue. They are socially engaged and are doing their best to communicate frequently, but they are unable to respond in a timely and organized way to the requests of parents and teachers, or to organize and initiate sophisticated play because they have considerable difficulty with executive function.

WHAT IS EXECUTIVE FUNCTION?

The technical definition of executive function is: the cognitive processes that help us regulate, control and manage our thoughts and actions. It includes planning, working memory, attention, problem solving, verbal reasoning, inhibition, cognitive flexibility, initiation of actions and monitoring of actions. But what does that look like in real life?

Cynthia Kim, in her blog [Musings of an Aspie](#) says:

In practice, executive function is a slippery concept. Sometimes it looks like responsibility. Sometimes it looks like self-discipline. Sometimes it looks like being a competent adult.

If you have poor EF, people might mistake you for being disorganized, lazy, incompetent, sloppy, or just plain not very bright. Why? Because executive function encompasses so many essential areas of daily living. Nearly everything we do calls on areas of executive function. Cooking. Cleaning. Parenting. Work. School. Self-care.

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EXECUTIVE FUNCTION, WHAT IS IT... CONTINUED....

One of our contributors, Rebecca Moyes, described executive function this way:

(Executive function deficits) can be likened to an employee who works for a company where the supervisor is unorganized and inefficient. Nothing seems to go right, things get misplaced, and general chaos seems to be the operational rule. It's a lot like that for children with autism spectrum disorders. The executive in charge of their brain is not effective, and because of this, planning processes suffer.

WHAT ARE THE ASPECTS OF OUR EXECUTIVE FUNCTION

It's important to know that not all people with ASD have issues with all the aspects of executive function. For instance, an individual might have the ability to plan, but lack the initiation to follow through. They might be able to problem solve once they realize there is actually a problem, but are unable to verbalize it. Here is a list of our executive functions and their basic descriptions.

Planning:

Planning is the ability to forward-think and choose the necessary actions to reach a goal, decide the right order, assign each task to the proper cognitive resources, and establish a plan of action. Those on the spectrum can have difficulty formulating plans to get through their days and organize tasks into completable sections.

Problem Solving:

To problem solve, an individual must identify a problem and then formulate a strategy to solve the problem. Problem solving uses almost all the other executive functions including reasoning, attention, planning, initiation, working memory, and monitoring. Depending on which of the executive functions the individual struggles with, that is where the problem solving chain will get broken.



Working Memory:

Individuals on the spectrum notoriously have specific memory deficits and strengths. They can seemingly remember every Jedi name, rank and serial number in all ten Star Wars movies, but have trouble remembering to eat, or what day it is, or what the order of the steps are when brushing teeth. Working memory is the ability to remember specific short term memories needed to execute a function or daily task.

Attention:

Attention is closely tied to working memory, and again those on the spectrum can show great strengths in some areas and severe challenges in others. Individuals with ASD often have a keen ability to focus, but directing that focus can be challenging. If the person with ASD has sensory issues, then it's possible all they will be able to focus their attention on is the sound of the lights buzzing or the smells of the other people in the room. An individual's ability to focus directly affects what they can keep in and recall from their short term memory

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EXECUTIVE FUNCTION, WHAT IS IT... CONTINUED....

Reasoning:

Reasoning, or verbal reasoning, is the ability to understand, analyze and think critically about concepts presented in words, and then relay them back or integrate them successfully. Many of those on the spectrum struggle with verbal acuity. Verbal reasoning can also be hindered by social meanings that are not obvious to those with autism.

Initiation:

Initiation is the ability to start an activity, plan, or task. For those with executive function difficulties with initiation, they may want to play a certain game, do their homework, or play an instrument, but unless the activity is initiated by someone else it doesn't happen. It has nothing to do with desire, or "want" – it is about lacking the function of "just doing it".

Inhibition:

Inhibition is impulse control; the ability to have emotional, cognitive or physical reactions that aren't acted upon in the moment. So when a person with ASD starts "information downloading" all the names and songs of their favourite 500 K-pop groups, this would be a lack of cognitive impulse control. Emotional outbursts, hand flapping, or stimming can be emotional and physical ways that impulse control aren't in place, (although some stimming can be soothing and help concentration if controlled and non-harmful). Some children with ASD simply cannot control their impulses sufficiently to participate in structured situations.

Cognitive Flexibility:

Cognitive flexibility in simple terms is the ability to roll with the punches. Those with autism are well known to need structure and predictability, and change can be very challenging. This can also lead to rigidity of thoughts and opinions, as well as schedules and routines.



Monitoring:

Monitoring is normally an unconscious process that kicks in when we are on auto pilot doing normal tasks. For instance, if you are walking down the street and talking to someone at the same time, normally only a small part of your brain is engaged in walking. You already know how to walk, so the monitoring part of the brain takes over and keeps you from bumping into things while you have your chat. For someone with executive function issues, if they were tired or overloaded, they would suddenly have problems with the "auto pilot" settings on basic activities, dropping or bumping into things, or simply not being able to pay attention in ways that could be hazardous like walking out onto a busy street.

How do we help individuals with autism overcome executive function challenges?

Executive function is something that most of us take for granted. We might have challenging areas here and there, maybe we aren't as organized as we would like, or maybe we lack some initiative, or self-control, but for those with executive function disorder even the basics can be hard. So how can he help? We will go over some ideas for how to help in our next blog post. (Part 2: <https://autismawarenesscentre.com/supporting-executive-function-in-children-with-autism-part-2/>)

<https://autismawarenesscentre.com/executive-function-what-is-it-and-how-do-we-support-it-in-those-with-autism-part-i/>

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IMPROVING EXECUTIVE FUNCTION

IMPROVING EXECUTIVE FUNCTION

By: [Meghan Barlow, Ph.D.](#)

People often refer to executive function as the “CEO” of the brain because it is what helps us set goals, plan, and get things done. It is a term professionals and lay people have used for years and it’s likely you have used it or heard it used in reference to people with autism, who often have trouble with executive functions.

How we think about executive function and teach the skills associated with the processes that make up executive function is changing. In fact, we can start by throwing out the metaphor of a CEO. Executive function is, as noted, a set of processes, rather than one overall skill. It is important to recognize how complex, and how involved, our executive functioning is in absolutely everything we do all day, every day in order to provide effective supports and interventions for those with executive function deficits.

For example, getting ready in the morning requires you to plan for how much time you’ll need to accomplish your tasks, remember to set an alarm, and, in the morning, decide to turn off the alarm and get out of bed (as opposed to hitting snooze over and over again). Next, you need to be able to properly sequence and organize the “getting ready” tasks appropriately. You need to monitor your time as you move through each task, remember the next task, and be able to initiate the next task once one task is completed. If someone interrupts you, you will need to be able to shift your attention momentarily and then get back on task. Difficulty with these “meta” skills, rather than the actual act of getting dressed or eating, is what usually gets in the way of a smooth morning routine.

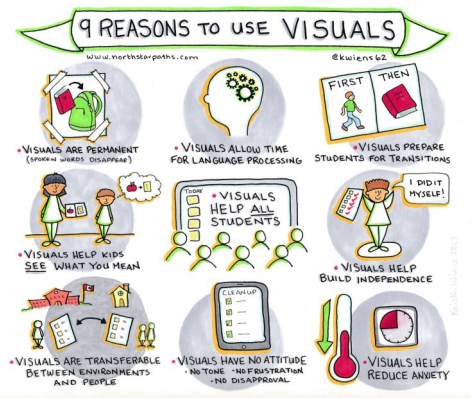
Although our executive functioning is a highly complex system, providing effective interventions doesn’t have to be. Here are some steps you can take to help an individual with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) who has trouble with executive function:

USE (GOOD) VISUALS

Parents and professionals working in the autism field have been incorporating visuals into their interventions for a long time. Being able to picture and visualize our way through specific tasks as well as into the future helps us plan, organize, and execute larger, more complex tasks.

To make the evidence-based intervention even more effective, use photographs of the materials and spaces your child is actually using and living in rather than clip art or generic photos. For example, instead of listing out pictures for a morning routine visual schedule, take a photograph of the child’s bedroom. Next, have your child use their fingers to “tap” their way through their morning routine on the photograph. By using this visual activity schedule, they will actually be rehearsing their way through the morning routine, picturing themselves in the space where they are meant to get ready. They “walk through” all of the steps of getting ready as they point their path from the bed to the dresser to the hamper.

Finally, you can increase the impact of visual activity schedules using social narratives to help guide a child with ASD through the steps of a morning routine. For example, “when I wake up, I get out of bed and put on my clothes for the day.”



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IMPROVING EXECUTIVE FUNCTION CONTINUED....

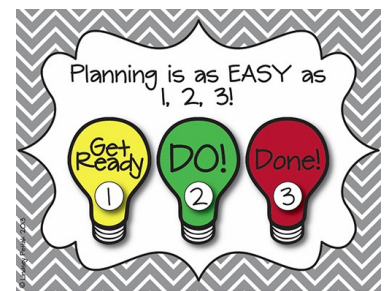
GESTURES, GESTURES, GESTURES!

A growing body of literature explores the role of gesturing in executive functioning. One particularly interesting finding from that research is that young neurotypical children who used a lot of gesturing performed better on cognitive tasks than children who did not use much gesturing, even when they were prompted to do so. Because of the core underlying deficits in social communication, many individuals with ASD have difficulty using and understanding gestures. By directly attending to teaching and prompting the use of gestures, parents, teachers, and providers have the potential to help individuals with ASD improve their ability to solve problems, achieve goals, keep information in their working memory, and shift more flexibly between tasks.

For example, tapping out and pointing through the morning routine on the visual map is a form of gesturing. If your child looks at the visual map and speaks aloud their steps without tapping the photograph, then prompt them to show you by pointing. If your child requires it, you can begin with a hand-over-hand prompt to help them move through the process.

PLAN BACKWARDS, EXECUTE FORWARD

Using visuals, show your child what the finished product (i.e., being ready in the morning) looks like. If your child is able, help them talk about what it would feel like when they are ready in time and prepared for the day. This step helps your child develop their future thinking. Now, work backwards. Help your child go through the steps of what needs to be done to reach the finished product and what they need to have ready in order to go through the steps. Taking photographs of each step along the way and having your child sequence the steps from left to right (as opposed to up and down) will help them to think through the process of getting ready.



While a visual task analysis like that one is commonly used with people with ASD, it's often illustrated with generic pictures, rather than photos. Additionally, the steps are often listed from the top of the page to the bottom. Using photographs of the individual doing those tasks in addition to sequencing the steps left to right are slight modifications to common interventions, that can play an important role in helping an individual develop improved executive function skills. Of course, parents, teachers, and providers will need to design appropriate visual schedules based on their child/student's individual needs.

When focusing on building independence, you should remember this simple phrase "do with, not for; do less, not more." As in the case of the visual activity schedule, interventions should be done with as much engagement from the child as possible, not simply created and then given to a child. Over time, adults can take less of a lead in the process and the child can take on more of the responsibility, having learned a system (planning backwards, executing forward) to rely on.

For further information on how to develop, implement, and maintain visual schedules, check out these resources: [NPDC Module on Visual Supports](#)

[Indiana University's "Using Visual Schedules: A Guide for Parents"](#)

[360 Thinking Seminars](#)

By incorporating visuals, teaching and prompting the use of gestures, and planning the execution of tasks wisely, parents and providers can strengthen the foundation for improved and independent executive functioning.

<https://researchautism.org/improving-executive-function/>

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KEEPING IT ALL TOGETHER DURING ONLINE LEARNING

Keeping It All Together During Online Learning – Helping Kids with their Executive Functioning

By. Andrew Luceno

When Executive Functioning Breaks Down

With online learning being the mode of program delivery for the foreseeable future, many caregivers are struggling to help their child get their work done. In some cases, caregivers are forced to leave their child at home unsupervised. In the best-case scenario, there's an adult at home who can structure some meaningful schoolwork and study time to help their child keep up. But, it's not always a simple task. You may find that your child:

- struggles to prioritize, structure, and get work done in the right order (i.e., planning)
- that they take a long time to get started (i.e., task initiation)
- perhaps they may have difficulty focusing (i.e., attention) on a task for any length of time when there are so many distractions around.

Planning, task initiation, and attention are processes called executive functions. They are being put to the test during this unique online learning situation in which we find ourselves.

Many children with good thinking (cognitive) abilities and academic skills struggle to get tasks started and meet deadlines. Regardless of how bright they are, they have difficulty doing schoolwork and staying on top of tasks – especially outside of the normal classroom routine. One possible explanation is that the mental processes that enable us to plan ahead, start and finish tasks, and manage our time (i.e., executive functions) need work. Executive functioning can affect what we do in the present and also how we plan and organize the future. These skills influence:

- our ability to coordinate multiple tasks at the same time,
- how we interact with others,
- how well we control our emotions, and,
- whether or not we learn from past mistakes.



For good reason, some experts refer to executive functioning as the “brain boss.”

When there is a problem with executive functioning, a child will often demonstrate similar issues across all of their subjects. They may have difficulty starting work, staying focused on tasks, completing work, and noting down deadlines. These children may be seen as “lazy” or “unmotivated”. The reality is that they don't know how to get started, what to do first, and how to create a learning environment for themselves free of distractions. Supporting children in developing their executive functioning can help them get past these barriers so that they can show their best work.

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KEEPING IT ALL TOGETHER DURING ONLINE LEARNING CONTINUED....

Children aren't born with executive functioning skills – they're born with the potential to develop them. So, fortunately, caregivers and teachers can help children develop executive functioning skills that are essential to success. Have you ever cooked a meal for a lot of people? Do you ever wonder how all those food dishes magically appear on the table at the right time? Planning to feed a group of people at once takes executive functioning:

- you need to buy ingredients,
- clean the house,
- set the table,
- preheat the oven,
- start cooking food at the right time so that it comes out hot, and
- make sure there's enough to go around.
- You may even prepare a little extra food in case someone unexpected shows up. Having weak executive functioning is a lot like cooking a frozen turkey. You may have all the ingredients you need (the turkey here represents good cognitive abilities and academic skills), but without planning well in advance - nobody's eating the main dish!



I like using the preparing meals example for executive functioning because

1. people seem to get it and
2. we can use meal preparation as a strategy to teach children executive functioning skills at home. Going forward, the focus of this article will be on the executive functions of attention, task Initiation and planning along with some strategies to support those areas.

Attention

Many children struggle to focus without any obvious distractions and the home study environment may create additional challenges. Children may have access to devices (e.g., tablet, smartphone, computer), the television, snacks in the pantry, siblings around them, toys, and their bed! From the child's perspective, there are many interesting things to do besides schoolwork so caregivers need to work extra hard to structure a suitable whole-day learning environment at home. Distance learning is somewhat new territory for most of us, which means we might need to support our kids in unique ways. Structuring the learning environment so that our kids can do their best is a great start.

Consider the following suggestions:

- Try to make your child's online learning school day look like a typical one. Encourage them to follow the regular timetable, sleep at the same time, and wake up as they usually would. Children with inconsistent routines may really struggle to focus and keep their emotions in check (we've all been there!), so a consistent routine is really important.

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KEEPING IT ALL TOGETHER DURING ONLINE LEARNING CONTINUED....

- Create a distraction-free study environment. There is no one-size-fits-all strategy to remove distractions from our lives completely, but we can try. Talk to your child about the distractions they face when trying to work from home (e.g., YouTube, Snapchat), and make a plan to minimize them. You might decide to hold onto their smartphones during the school day or use a tech solution to block certain websites when children need to focus most.
- Have your child work in a well-lit and organized place where you can check in on them periodically. When children are supervised and have a clear understanding of the expectations, they are more likely to stay on task. Consider having your child work at the kitchen table instead of in their bedroom, where they will be harder to supervise.
- Your child may benefit from using sound-dampening headphones or earplugs to block out distracting noises around the house – especially when the whole family is physically isolating.

Task Initiation

For most children, task initiation is the biggest stumbling block to task completion. Especially in an online learning environment, not having an adult to help with this step could mean not starting at all. Many adults struggle to understand why their child has such a difficult time getting started on tasks (i.e., procrastination). We might even tell them, “If you could just get started, it won’t take much time at all – you’ll see!” But there are many possible reasons why children feel paralyzed at this step. Next time your child gets stuck on getting started, ask them the following:

Task Initiation			
Task:	Understand (clarify)	Brainstorm	Materials
How much time?	Double Check Work	What are the steps?	Stay focused
What I need:	I need materials.	I need help.	I need more time.
I need something else to do.	I need to stay on task.	I need a quick break.	I need to clean up/organize materials.
Positive Self-Talk:	It's okay to make mistakes.	I am open to learning new things.	I will complete my tasks.
I am focused.	I can do it!	I can take deep, slow breaths.	I am brave enough to ask for help.

- Do you know how to get started (e.g., what comes first)?
- Do you have what you need to be successful (e.g., materials/resources, assignment details)?
- Can you handle this task (e.g., have you learned what’s necessary to do this)?
- Are you worried that you’ll fail?

If a child struggles with any of those questions, it’s time to help them. In time, we should hope that our child will think about, respond to, and address those questions themselves, leading to more independence. Then always reinforce the concept of “Done is better than perfect because perfect is never done.”

Next, work with the brain – not against it. Limit the amount of time your child will spend sitting and working on a task to 20 to 25 minutes (before taking a quick break), sometimes more depending on their age. There are two reasons why this is important. First, limiting the amount of time promotes really focusing on task initiation and not sustained attention. Second, it is easier for a child to get started on a task if they know they can get through it quickly, rather than feeling it is just the beginning of a long, drawn-out process. While 20-minutes does not seem like a very long time, we should remember that our attention resources run out, and breaks help us recharge.

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KEEPING IT ALL TOGETHER DURING ONLINE LEARNING CONTINUED....

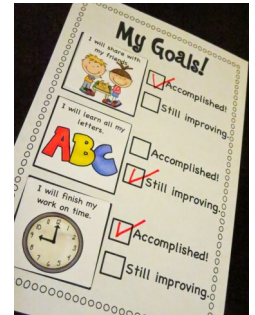
Finally, check-in with your child periodically to provide motivation and track their progress. You may help them brainstorm a starting point to get them going which can be especially helpful when they have to complete writing tasks. Another option is for your child to speak to someone familiar with the task (e.g., teacher, classmate) and to ask them how they would recommend getting started. Either way, it's important that our child feels comfortable enough to ask for help when they need it. Helping your child ask for help (e.g., through role-play) is a great strategy to support them in developing their independence.

Planning

Planning and prioritizing are inseparable. Helping your child determine what comes first and how to get it done could make all the difference between smooth sailing and a lot of frustration and stress.

Work with your child to determine which task needs to get done first and if there's enough time to complete it realistically. Having some kind of visual planning system is essential (e.g., large whiteboard or calendar, using Post-it notes to sequence the planning steps, using technology like digital calendars). A visual system will help with goal and reward setting, and create balance throughout the school week. Next, get very familiar with the power of chunking tasks – breaking them down into smaller and manageable parts. Chunking helps children:

- set goals,
- anticipate setbacks,
- better estimate how long an assignment will take, and
- reduce some of the stress that may be experienced when taking on an overwhelming task.



Research supports chunking as a motivator because as children complete small steps, their brains reward them with dopamine. Dopamine is the happy chemical the brain releases when we receive a text message, or when playing a favorite videogame. So, there are practical and neurological benefits to effective planning strategies.

Teaching Executive Functioning Skills

Children need to be taught executive functioning skills. In fact, the area of the brain primarily responsible for executive functioning (i.e., the prefrontal cortex) is not fully developed until around the age of 25-years. That means that caregivers can help children by looking for ways to teach executive functioning skills at home – whether it's through a school assignment or a household chore. We can really help our kids by giving them some practice with removing distractions, initiating tasks, and planning when the stakes are low, and they can afford to make mistakes. Giving children planning tasks around the house (e.g., planning a meal, cleaning their room), playing games as a family (e.g., UNO) with distractions removed, banning any kind of device from the dinner table (it's important that adults model this), and encouraging your child to take any big task and break it down into small steps, are all ways we can constantly reinforce the development of executive functioning skills at home. What's great about practicing those skills at home is that they are transferable to all areas of life.

For some quick facts about executive functioning skills, have a look at these [Quick Facts on Executive Functions](#) from Childmind.org. [Smart but Scattered](#) by Peg Dawson and Richard Guare has been a go-to book for many parents who want to help their kids be more efficient and successful through developing executive functioning skills. Finally, [Harvard University has developed some free activities you can use at home to help your child in this area to](#). It's important to consider that executive functioning deficits are often standing in the way of our child's ability to do their best. Still, we can help them develop these skills to be more successful.

<https://www.foothillsacademy.org/community-services/parent-education/parent-articles/keeping-it-all-together>

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IMPROVE EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS WITH DIY PROJECTS

Improve Executive Functions with Do It Yourself (DIY) Projects

Posted on December 23, 2020 by James Daley

Our team at LearningWorks for Kids recommends playing video games as a tool for practicing executive functions because they require problem-solving, flexible thinking, and sustained focus and effort. These executive skills are not just important for playing video games but crucial for getting the best out of the child's education. We also suggest using gameplay as a teaching tool because kids typically love to spend so much of their time in front of screens. COVID-19 influenced stay at home orders, remote learning, and restrictions from typical extracurricular activities have made screen time less attractive. Kids are looking for other activities to do during the pandemic over the past 9 months. Our team would like to direct you to do-it-yourself projects that can also serve to improve executive functions.



You might ask, how can your child improve executive functions with do it yourself (DIY) projects? In many ways, DIY projects are the best way because of the hands-on nature of learning -even better than video games-to practice and improve executive functions. Like video games, they are engaging, sustain attention and persistence, require planning, organization, and time management. DIY projects often involve creativity and flexibility planning skills as well and do serve the purpose of taking kids away from their screens. Most DIY projects suitable for kids will practice and improve executive functions because as they often involve a step-by-step process, where a child needs to evaluate their assets, make alterations when appropriate, and work hard towards completing it.

Many of the best do-it-yourself projects combine a child's interests with problem-solving skills. For example, this might include mechanical capacities, the ability to follow directions, and even learning how to use new tools. Some do-it-yourself projects require the integration of technology for the project. For example, the directions or research to complete a DIY project might start by searching the Internet for directions or a video. Consider how many adults ([and now kids as well](#)) learn to cook by watching cooking videos.

Finding the best DIY project to practice and improve executive functions is a matter of a child's interest and developmental stage. In helping your child select projects consider their age, learning style, passions, and attention span. For example, if a child has a short attention span find a project that they can successfully complete in less than an hour. Make certain that the directions for a DIY project are written at a level that your child understands and can follow. Successful completion of projects will encourage more efforts in the future.

Here are some other tools to improve executive functions with do it yourself (DIY) projects:

[13 DIY Projects Your Whole Family Can Do Together](#)

Thirteen DIY projects to work on together and bond as a family. Projects range in difficulty from painting rocks to building a treehouse. These fun projects can be done with the help of a parent, or it can even be a project for teens to complete on their own.

[41 Fun craft ideas for kids to make at home](#)

A list of tons of crafts for kids to do at home to beat boredom. Many of the craft ideas also include YouTube video demonstrations and websites providing instructions, making the projects less of a hassle to do.

Continued on page 11.

IMPROVE EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS WITH DIY PROJECTS CONTINUED...

Home Depot Activities for Kids

Home Depot has a huge compilation of craft project guides for kids. It is easy to decide what project is the best match for you based on the information provided on the overview of projects. The overview provides a quick summary, a project's level of difficulty, and estimated completion time. It is a fast way to scan through projects to find the one you want to do.

11 Easy Craft Ideas for Kids to Make With Stuff You Have at Home

One of the hardest parts about doing craft projects is having to buy all the supplies needed before you start. Parents.com has a list of easy crafts that can be made with materials found at home. This makes for a stress-free experience for parents while kids still can have fun crafting.

DIY Projects for Teens

DIY Projects for Teens seems to have an endless amount of projects for teens. The website features a surplus of articles each about a different type of project. The DIY projects are broken down into categories to find the right one for you. There are so many options to choose from, such as different ways to use old jeans, cookie mason jar recipes, nail polish crafts, and much more.

36 Cool DIY Projects for Teen Boys

It can be harder to find the right projects for teen boys that are fun and age-appropriate. With 36 cool projects for teenage boys, there is something for everyone. Examples of projects are building bottle rockets and skateboard shelves.

<https://learningworksforkids.com/2020/12/improve-executive-functions-with-do-it-yourself-diy-projects/>

INTERVENTIONS FOR STUDENTS WHO STRUGGLE.....

Interventions for Students who Struggle with Task Initiation

Clipart by Kate Hadfield & Sarah Pecorino

www.thepathway2success.com

Pathway 2 SUCCESS



Teach task initiation skills explicitly



Use a countdown timer



Incorporate areas of student interest



Provide directions orally & visually



Practice the "rocket ship countdown"



Reduce most challenging work



Train peer mentors to provide support



Use brain breaks between tasks



Make it a race to get started on work



Take turns writing to get started



Develop a work contract with rewards



Give more student choice

Executive Functioning Challenges:

20+ Interventions for Students Who Struggle with Task Initiation

Pathway 2 SUCCESS

www.thepathway2success.com

Strategies and supports for executive functioning challenges can make all the difference, especially for students who struggle with task initiation. This is such an important skill, since it's like the motor in allowing us to get started on all tasks and assignments. When someone is struggling to initiate, tasks take longer and require more effort.....

Please go to <https://www.thepathway2success.com/interventions-for-executive-functioning-challenges-task-initiation/> to read the rest of the article and find out about the 20+ interventions.

The LBL ESD Autism Agenda Newsletter is a compilation of national and regional resources designed to support families and school teams. Every effort is made to provide accurate and complete information in the LBL ESD Autism Agenda Newsletter; however, LBL ESD cannot guarantee that there will be no errors. For example, some of the content within curated resources from across the nation may not apply to Oregon. LBL ESD does not assume any legal liability for any direct, indirect or any other loss or damage of any kind for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information, product, or process disclosed herein, and do not represent that use of such information, product, or process would not infringe on privately owned rights.

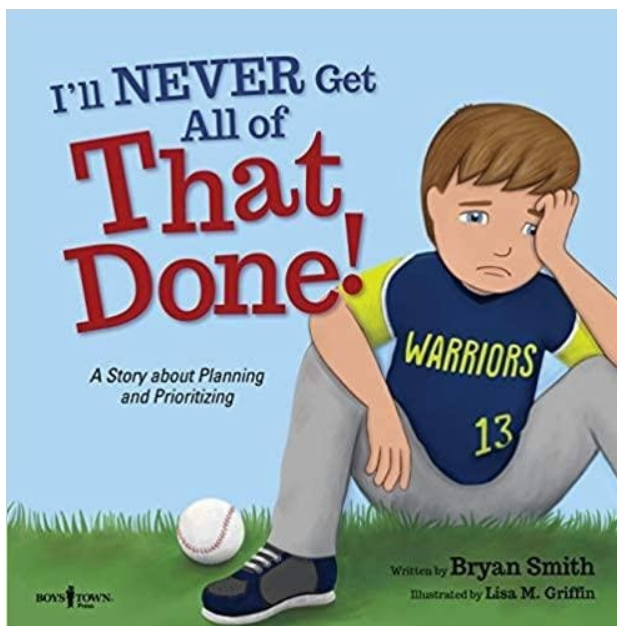
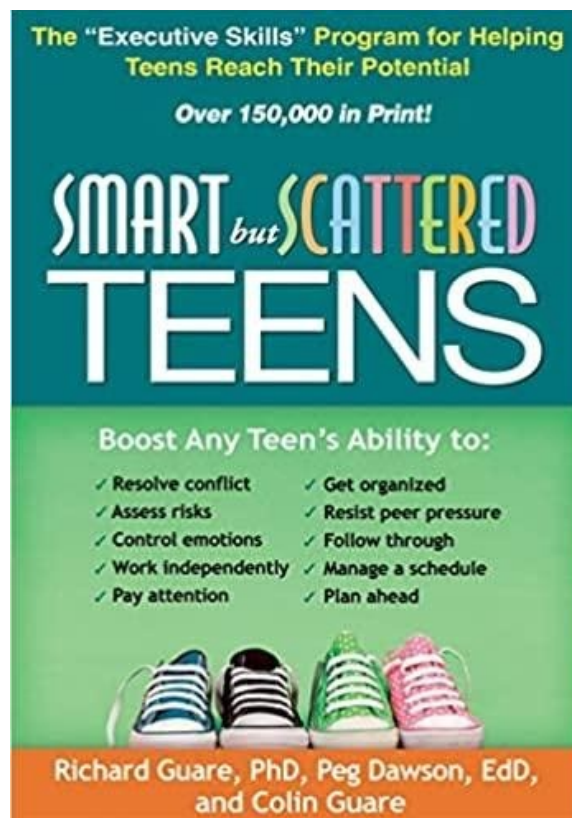
BOOK REVIEWS

Smart But Scattered Teens

by Richard Guare and Peg Dawson

If you're the parent of a "smart but scattered" teen, trying to help him or her grow into a self-sufficient, responsible adult may feel like a never-ending battle. Now you have an alternative to micromanaging, cajoling, or ineffective punishments. This positive guide provides a science-based program for promoting teens' independence by building their executive skills--the fundamental brain-based abilities needed to get organized, stay focused, and control impulses and emotions. Executive skills experts Drs. Richard Guare and Peg Dawson are joined by Colin Guare, a young adult who has successfully faced these issues himself. Learn step-by-step strategies to help your teen live up to his or her potential now and in the future--while making your relationship stronger. Helpful worksheets and forms can be downloaded and printed in a convenient 8 1/2" x 11" size.

For younger students, check out the authors' other book, ***Smart but Scattered***.



I'll Never Get All of That Done! A Story About Planning and Prioritizing

by Bryan Smith

Blake has a to-do list that's just too long. How can his parents and teachers expect him to finish his homework, clean his room AND bake cookies for the baseball bake sale? Don't they know there's something urgent he has to do now like play video games?! School counselor and award-winning author Bryan Smith reveals the answer in this relatable story, written for K-5 students, about the power of following the 3 Ps – prioritizing, planning and posting a reminder of what needs to be done in order of importance. Included are tips for parents and educators on how to teach kids planning and prioritizing when completing chores, schoolwork or any project.

Check out other titles in the author's Executive FUNction storybook series: What's the Problem? : A Story Teaching Problem-Solving, Of Course It's a Big Deal: A Story About

Learning to Act Calmly and Appropriately, How Did You Miss That?: A Story Teaching Self-Monitoring, My Day is Ruined: A Story Teaching Flexible Thinking, It Was Just Right Here!, Time to Get Started: A Story About Learning to Take Initiative, Fix it With Focus: A Story About Ignoring Distractions and Staying on Task, and *How do I Remember All That?: A Story to Improve Working Memory*.

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VISUALS



Linn Benton Lincoln ESD
Cascade Regional Autism
Program

905 4th Ave SE
Albany, Or. 97321

Tel: 541-812-2600
Fax: 541-926-6047
E-mail: webmaster@lblead.k12.or.us

Autism Consultants:

Skye McCloud-
skye.mccloud@lblead.k12.or.us
541-336-2012

Ryan Stanley-
ryan.stanley@lblead.k12.or.us
541-812-2773

Michelle Helton-
michelle.helton@lblead.k12.or.us
541-812-2674

Amanda Stenberg-
amanda.stenberg@lblead.k12.or.us
541-812-2676

Michelle Neilson-
michelle.neilson@lblead.k12.or.us
541-812-2678

Executive Function

The brain's ability to take in
information,
interpret this information,
and make decisions
based on this information.

Planning**Organizing****Shifting Attention****Multi-Tasking****Challenges**

How to Systematically Approach a Task

How to Break Down a Task
into Smaller Steps

How to Manage and Organize Time

How to Complete a Task



Geneva Centre for Autism
Where hope takes wing

Executive Function**Strategies**

Teach How to Ask for Help

Give One Instruction at a Time

Point Out the Important Information

Use Clear and Direct Language

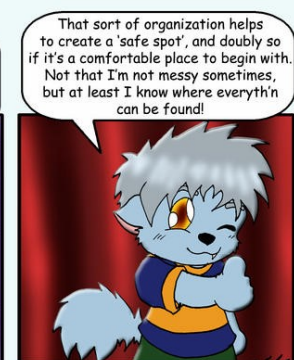
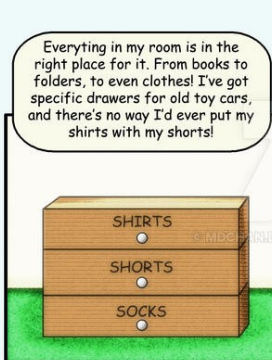
Prioritize by Importance

Create a reasonable Time Line
or Due Dates

Know what Works for Your Student
and Stick with it

Adapted from:

Asperger Syndrome and Adolescence
By Brenda Smith Myles, Diane Adreon

AuTalkz**Organization**

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