

Executive Functioning

What is Executive Functioning?

Executive Functioning Strategies

Goal-Plan-Do-Review

Getting Angry (Steps)

Assignment Log

Folder System Instructions

Folder System Tutorial

Folder Divider



Special Education Department

Jordan School District

April 2014

What is Executive Functioning?



1. What are Executive Functioning Skills?

Executive functioning skills allow a child to control impulses and emotions, be flexible, plan and organize. These skills are needed for learning and day-to-day behavior and include such things as:

- **Flexibility:** the ability to change strategies or revise plans when conditions change.
- **Working Memory:** the ability to hold information in mind and use it to complete a task.
- **Self-Monitoring:** the ability to monitor and evaluate your own performance.
- **Planning and Setting Priorities:** the ability to create steps to reach a goal and to make decisions about what to focus on.
- **Task Initiation (Getting Started):** the ability to recognize when it is time to get started on something and then to begin without procrastinating.
- **Organization:** the ability to create and maintain systems to keep track of information or materials.

2. What are Some Examples of Limitations in Executive Functioning Skills?

- impulsive decisions
- difficulty calming down and doing homework
- trouble following directions, particularly when they are only given orally
- trouble proofreading and checking work
- doing things too fast or not paying attention to time limits
- coming to class unprepared
- turning assignments in late doing homework but forgetting to turn it in

What is Executive Functioning?

Parent Information



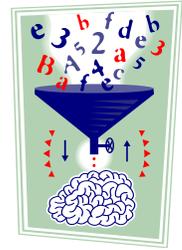
3. How can Parents Help their Child with a Learning Disability that Involves Executive Functioning Difficulties?

- Short-term strategies focus on the task to be completed and where in the home the task can best be completed. Help your child develop strategies on a day-to-day basis for meeting school demands. Knowing they have support from a caring parent helps to reduce the risk of depression, anxiety and low self-esteem.
- Long-term strategies focus on working with the teachers at school in directly teaching executive skills over time so your student will develop into a successful independent adult.
- General things to try: take step-by-step approaches to work, rely on visual organization aids, use tools like time organizers, computers, or watches with alarms, create checklists and “to do” lists, use visual calendars to keep track of long-term assignments, due dates, chores and activities, organize work space, minimize clutter, schedule a weekly time to clean and organize the work space.

4. Resources:

- Executive Skills and Your Child with Learning Disabilities, Goldsmith, B., NCLD
<http://www.nclد.org/types-learning-disabilities/executive-function-disorders/executive-skills-your-child-with-learning-disabilities>
- Learning Disabilities Association of America
<http://ldaamerica.org/>

What is Executive Functioning?



Intervention for Executive Functioning Difficulties

Assessment Information:

- Executive Functioning skills allow a student to control impulses and emotions, be flexible, plan and organize.
- A student should be referred for an evaluation if s/he demonstrates a significant difficulty *over time* in any of the following areas:

| Area | What It May Look Like |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Inhibit | Impulsive, fidgety, acts without thinking, blurts out, needs supervision, disruptive, distracted |
| Shift | Rigid, argumentative, upset with change in routine, impulsive, acts without thinking, blurts out, disruptive, needs supervision |
| Emotional Control | Overreacts to small problems, sudden angry outbursts, becomes teary easily, rapid mood changes, “hyper-silly,” easily melts down |

General Principles of Effective Interventions:

- 1. Teach goal-directed problem-solving process** within everyday meaningful routines, having real-world relevance and application, using key people (parents/teachers/peers) as models, “coaches”.
- 2. External to internal process:**
 - External models of multi-step problem-solving routines.
 - External guidance to develop and implement everyday routines.
 - Practice application/use of routines.
 - Fade external support to cueing internal generation and use of routines
- 3. Interventions:**
 - Must fit with child, environment, teacher, parents
 - Must make rationale work for the teacher/parent
 - Involve teacher/parent in planning possible solutions
 - Measure success/failure
- 4. Strategies for Working Memory:**
 - Pre-teach • ‘Ready to listen’ • Teach chunking • Break up lengthy tasks
 - Self-talk • Classroom placement • Breaks with motor activity
- 5. Strategies for Planning and Organization:**
 - Increase structure and routines • Provide Modeling/Examples
 - Verbalize plans • Pre-organize
 - Break tasks into smaller steps • Teach use of visual plan/organize tools (folder system)

What is Executive Functioning?

Intervention for Executive Functioning Difficulties



Academic Information:

1. Intervention strategies for developing *internal control*

| Strategy | Example |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase Awareness | increase awareness |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modeling | modeling steps in a problem, use of peer notes |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach specific skill/routine | student checklists for self-monitoring, teach when to use specific strategies, teach in a systematic way |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-regulation | Goal-Plan-Do-Review, folder system |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbal mediation | social stories |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbal/Nonverbal labeling | teach expectations using a verbal/visual prompt |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach the use of Internal Feedback | using a verbal and/or visual “think” cue, 6,4,2 min timer |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish self-administered rewards | behavior charts – student marks card when timer rings |

2. Intervention strategies for maintaining *external control*

| Strategy | Example |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structuring the Environment | provide materials early allowing sufficient time for |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structuring Time | chunk large assignments, announce due dates early |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Externalizing Cues for Effective Processing | memorization, riddles, mnemonics |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing Feedback | sincere, timely |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing Rewards | take a break |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aligning External Demands with Internal Desires | provide options, use technology, differentiated instruction |

What is Executive Functioning?

Intervention for Executive Functioning Difficulties



Academic Information:

3. Help students set goals for their academic work behavior. Goal setting can be taught in much the same way as teaching any other skill strategy. Explain the importance of setting work goals, require that the student set a goal, and provide the student with the means to monitor his/her progress toward their goal. When instructing students on how to set goals, teachers should remember that the most effective goals are those that are specific, can be accomplished in a reasonably short time, and are moderately challenging.

4. Resources:

- McCloskey, G., Perkins, L. A., & Van Divner, B. *Assessment and intervention for executive function difficulties*. NY: Routledge, 2009.
- Meltzer, L., Greschler, M. “The Executive Function and School Performance: A 21st Century Challenge.” National Center for Learning Disabilities (www.ncl.org)
<http://www.ncl.org/types-learning-disabilities/executive-function-disorders/executive-functioning-strategies-success-teaching-students>
- Stuart, A. “How to Help a Child with Weak Working Memory.” National Center for Learning Disabilities (www.ncl.org)
<http://www.ncl.org/types-learning-disabilities/executive-function-disorders/how-to-help-child-with-weak-working-memory>
- University of Washington. “Academic Accommodations for Students with Learning Disabilities.” (2012) Permission granted to use???
http://www.washington.edu/doi/Brochures/PDF/accomm_ld.pdf

What is Executive Functioning?

Interventions for Executive Functioning Difficulties



Behavior Information:

1. The use of a behavior plan with rewards and punishments plays an important role in a good intervention program; however the ultimate goal is to help a student internalize executive control.
 - **Spell out the Rationale:** When teaching a student a new behavior strategy, it is essential that s/he understand the rationale behind it. Students with poor organization skills often feel pressured by their time commitments and responsibility. Teach and model strategies to help them commit to doing it for self-improvement and generalizing to new situations.
 - **Use Rewards:** This can be as basic as a point/behavior card, where the student can see the connection between practicing a new behavior/skill and experiencing success while using the skill.
 - **Establish a Routine:** This is important for older students who may struggle more with getting started on work assignments and completing work (i.e., folder system).
 - **Set Time Limits:** When working with students to get them to use steps of a targeted strategy, help them understand how long it might take to complete a task by setting time limits. Using a checklist is helpful for a student to self-monitor his/her success in using this strategy.
2. A teacher may not know beforehand whether a student exhibiting executive function difficulties will, or will not, respond as desired to a behavior management program. If, after a reasonable trial period, the program does not appear to be working, implement program modifications such as, reducing the time between the student demonstrating the desired behavior and receiving a reward.
3. If modifications to a behavior plan for a student with executive functioning issues are not working, rather than assume that the student's behavior is unalterable, a teacher should try to develop intervention programs that are not dependent on the use of rewards or punishment. Even when a behavior plan is producing the desired results with a student with executive function issues, a teacher should realize that a plan that relies strictly on rewards and punishments to produce the desired results are only external forms of control. **Teachers working with students with executive function issues must teach students the skill of becoming consciously aware of, reflecting on, and internalizing the control of their behavior.**
4. **Resources:**
 - McCloskey, G., Perkins, L. A., & Van Divner, B. (2009). *Assessment and intervention for executive function difficulties*. NY: Routledge 2009.
 - Ehmkke, R. Helping Kids who Struggle with Executive Functions. Learning specialists discuss how to get organized." (2012) Child Mind Institute (www.childmind.org)
<http://www.childmind.org/en/posts/articles/2012-8-20-helping-kids-executive-functions-organization>
 - Goldsmith, B. "Tantrums, Meltdowns and More: Executive Dysfunction and Behavior." National Center for Learning Disabilities (www.nclld.org).<http://www.nclld.org/types-learning-disabilities/executive-function-disorders/executive-dysfunction-behavior-problem>

What is Executive Functioning?



Website Resources for Executive Functioning

- Electronic Home Note (free app) – Can text parents from a computer program. <https://www.remind101.com>
- Pinterest Board with list of Executive Functioning Apps. (free) <http://www.pinterest.com/lasenders/apps-for-executive-function/>
- Dragon Dictation <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/dragon-dictation/id341446764?mt=8>
- iHomework <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/ihomework/id302786560?mt=8>
- Notetaking <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/coursenotes/id364183278?mt=8>
- Note Taking and Recording Lectures <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/soundnote/id364789577?mt=8>
- Article “What is Executive Functioning” www.ldonline.org/article/29122?gclid=CNynl6u9-rUCFTcmPAodqgIAAw&theme=print
- For Parents – Executive Functioning Definitions <http://www.nclد.org/types-learning-disabilities/executive-function-disorders/terms-to-know-child-struggles-with-executive-functioning-issues>
- Motivating a Child with Executive Dysfunction <http://www.nclد.org/types-learning-disabilities/executive-function-disorders/motivating-child-executive-dysfunction>
- Organizing and Prioritizing Strategies <http://www.nclد.org/types-learning-disabilities/executive-function-disorders/executive-functioning-organizing-prioritizing?start=1>

What is Executive Functioning?

Assistive Technology Supports



Writing Supports – Hardware

- Fusion portable word processor
- AlphaSmart keyboarding device
- The Writer, perfect for keyboard instruction and writing support

Writing Supports – Software

- Co-Writer – works in conjunction with any application you write in.
- SOLO – a literacy suite of the most popular assistive technology accommodations, including a text reader, graphic organizer, talking word processor, and word prediction.
- WordQ - a software tool used along with standard writing software.
- Draft:Builder – breaks down the writing process into three manageable steps:
 - 1) brainstorming,
 - 2) note-taking and
 - 3) writing the first draft.
- Write:OutLoud – is simple to use and reads words as they are written, providing real-time auditory feedback.

Curriculum Supports

- Boardmaker Activity Pad – moves interactive activities beyond the computer and directly into the hands of the learner!
- Mobile Activity Player – lets you share adapted activities with all of your students for go-anywhere learning.

Reading Supports – Hardware

- The Readingpen® Basic Edition K-12 – designed specifically to help Elementary school-age readers improve their reading skills.
- The Pulse Smartpen – records and links audio to what you write, so you never miss a word.
- IRISPen Express – is an intuitive text recognition handheld scanner.
- iPad

Reading Supports – Software

- Book Wizard – a program to read digital talking books.
- Bookshare.org (Web Based) – accessible books and periodicals for readers with print disabilities.
- Read:OutLoud – provides accessibility supports like text-to-speech and study tools that help you read with comprehension.

Executive Functioning Strategies

This report lists selected accommodations in one column and research citations for each in the next column. A third column includes a space to write notes.

| Accommodation | Research Citation | NOTES |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● DEVELOP A STUDENT SELF-CHECK ERROR CHECKLIST. Meet with the student and generate a short list of the most common errors that the student habitually makes on course assignments (e.g., 'In writing assignments, some words are illegible', 'Not all words at sentence beginning are capitalized'.) Format that list as a customized error-correction checklist. Instruct the student to review completed assignments using the error-correction checklist before turning in the work. | <p>Beech, M. (2010). Accommodations: Assisting students with disabilities. Florida Department of Education. Retrieved from http://www.fldoe.org/ese/pdf/acomm-educator.pdf</p> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ASSIGN A 'FALL-BACK' PEER. Choose a peer whom the student can call or email to get details about missing or lost homework assignments. | <p>Barkley, R. A. (2008). 80+ classroom accommodations for children or teens with ADHD. <i>The ADHD Report</i>, 16(4), 7-10.</p> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PROMOTE STUDENT-DEVELOPED STUDY SCHEDULES. Sit with the student to develop daily (and perhaps weekly and monthly) schedules to study material from a course or content-area. Meet periodically with the student to update these study schedules, gradually placing full responsibility on the student to create the schedule independently and bring to the instructor for review. | <p>Gettinger, M., & Seibert, J. K. (2002). Contributions of study skills to academic competence. <i>School Psychology Review</i>, 31, 350-365.</p> | |

From: Intervention Central. *Executive Functioning Strategies* by Jim Wright, reprinted with permission.

 Learning Disability Accommodations Finder : *Checklist Maker*

| Accommodation | Research Citation | NOTES |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PROVIDE SCHEDULES/AGENDAS. Provide the student with an academic agenda or schedule for the class period or school day. This agenda outlines the instructional activities, independent assignments, and other tasks to be covered during the period, as well as their approximate duration. Preview the schedule with students to prepare them for upcoming activities. To forestall problem behaviors that might arise during a long or challenging activity, refer to the schedule at several points during the activity in order both to remind students of the time remaining and (perhaps) to describe the next activity to follow. Prepare students with a brief prompt/warning to prepare them for upcoming transitions between activities. | <p>Kern, L, & Clemens, N. (2007). Antecedent strategies to promote appropriate classroom behavior. <i>Psychology in the Schools</i>, 44(1), 65-75.</p> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SELF-MONITOR STUDENT GOALS. Meet with the student to develop one or more classroom performance goals (e.g., arriving to class on time; completing independent assignments; participating in class discussion). Have the student monitor and chart her or his performance during each class period. Meet periodically with the student to review performance. | <p>Barkley, R. A. (2008). 80+ classroom accommodations for children or teens with ADHD. <i>The ADHD Report</i>, 16(4), 7-10.</p> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● USE DAILY HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT SHEET. Create an assignment sheet for the student to record daily homework assignments. The sheet should include columns to record individual homework tasks, materials needed for each task, an estimated amount of time needed to complete each task, and whether the student actually completes and turns in each assignment task. Optionally, have the student collect completed homework assignment sheets and turn them in each week to verify that they are being used. | <p>Barkley, R. A. (2008). 80+ classroom accommodations for children or teens with ADHD. <i>The ADHD Report</i>, 16(4), 7-10.</p> | |

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Goal – Plan – Do – Review

Goal

What do I want to accomplish?

| |
|--|
| |
| |
| |
| |

Plan

How am I going to accomplish my goal?

| |
|--|
| |
| |
| |
| |

Prediction: How Well Will I Do?

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---------|----|
| | Not good | | | | | | | | Amazing | |
| Self rating: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Others rating: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

How much will I get done?

Do

| Problems | Solutions |
|----------|-----------|
| | |
| | |
| | |

Review: How Did I Do?

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---------|----|
| | Not good | | | | | | | | Amazing | |
| Self rating: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Others rating: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

What will I do next time?

Adapted from Advanced Assessment Of Executive Function by Peter K. Isquith, Ph.D.
 Jordan School District In-service Training, February 25, 2010

**GETTING ANGRY?
DON'T WANT TO DO IT?
SOMEONE BUGGING YOU?**

- 1. STOP**
- 2. BREATHE**
- 3. THINK ABOUT CHOICES**
- 4. THINK ABOUT WHAT WILL
HAPPEN**
- 5. CHOOSE WHAT WILL HELP YOU
ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS!**
- 6. DO IT!**

**REMEMBER:
CLEAR EYES, FULL HEARTS, CAN'T LOSE!**

Source: Dr. Megan McCormick (Jordan School District)

Fail Proof Folder System

Teacher Instructions:

Your student _____ will be using the “Folder System” to help him/her with planning, organization, work completion and study skills. Your participation is vital to the success of this system. Below is how you can help your student be successful with this “Executive Functions” intervention.

First: Please set aside a time for _____ to “Teach” you how the folder system works.

Second: Provide praise for when you see them using their folder during instruction!

Third: Prompt them to get out the appropriate folder for the subject you are teaching.

Fourth: Check in with _____ during your end of the day clean up and make sure they are taking their folders home EACH and EVERY day.

Fifth: Provide praise and other reinforcers for _____ when they return with their folders in the morning.

If the folder system is connected to a Home Note Behavior Contract, provide the agreed upon points on that tracking system for use of the Folder System.

Any concerns or modifications to the folder system please email me and we can make adjustments!

The Folder System should be used IN PLACE OF the Daily Planner system and used when the Daily Planner system is not working for this student.

Megan McCormick, Ph.D. (Jordan School District, 2012)

Fail Proof Folder System

Parent Instructions:

Your child _____ will be using the “Folder System” to help him/her with planning, organization, work completion and study skills. Your participation is vital to the success of this system. Below is how you can help your child be successful with this “Executive Functions” intervention.

First: Please set aside a time for _____ to “Teach” you how the folder system works. Then sign the form verifying that you were taught.

Second: Set up an appointment for EVERY WEEK NIGHT and SUNDAY NIGHT to check each folder to review what your child is working on for Homework.

Third: During this nightly review of each folder, help your student organize and prioritize what they need to get done that night to be ready for tomorrow’s school day.

Fourth: Structure your child’s homework time by “Chunking” work time into 10-15 minute blocks of “Work Time” interspersed with 10-15 minute breaks.

Using this schedule, limit their total homework time to no more than 2 hours a night. They can then turn in whatever they got done during the work periods to their teacher the next day.

Fifth: Provide praise and other reinforcers for _____ when they are working during their “Work Times” and for using their Folders.

Sixth: At the end of Homework Time, make sure your child gets all the folders organized and back into their packs to take back to school the next day.

If the folder system is connected to a Home Note Behavior Contract, sign the Home Note for return the next day and provide the agreed upon rewards for use of the Folder System.

Any concerns or modifications to the folder system please email me and we can make adjustments!

The Folder System should be used IN PLACE OF the Daily Planner system and used when the Daily Planner system is not working for this student.

Megan McCormick, Ph.D. (Jordan School District, 2012)

Folder System Parent Tutorial

My son/daughter has taught me how to use the folder system on _____(date). I will support him/her by checking his/her folders at least once a week to make sure he/she is using the system.

Parent Signature: _____

Source: Megan McCormick, Ph.D. (Jordan School District 2012)

Folder System Parent Tutorial

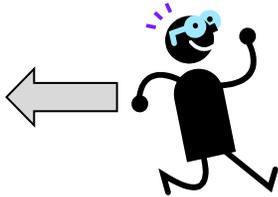
My son/daughter has taught me how to use the folder system on _____(date). I will support him/her by checking his/her folders at least once a week to make sure he/she is using the system.

Parent Signature: _____

Source: Megan McCormick, Ph.D. (Jordan School District 2012)

Folder Divider

Left Side:



Anything that is NOT Done:

Homework

Projects

Starters



In Front of this Divider:

Work to turn IN!!

DO NOT leave class with ANY work in front of this divider!



In Back of this Divider:

**Any work you get back, such as
notes, study materials, etc..**