Executive Skills: Definitions

- **Response Inhibition**: The capacity to think before you act – this ability to resist the urge to say or do something allows us the time to evaluate a situation and how our behavior might impact it.

- **Working Memory**: The ability to hold information in memory while performing complex tasks. It incorporates the ability to draw on past learning or experience to apply to the situation at hand or to project into the future.
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- **Working Memory**: The ability to hold information in memory while performing complex tasks. It incorporates the ability to draw on past learning or experience to apply to the situation at hand or to project into the future.

- **Emotional Control**: The ability to manage emotions in order to achieve goals, complete tasks, or control and direct behavior.

- **Flexibility**: The ability to revise plans in the face of obstacles, setbacks, new information or mistakes. It relates to an adaptability to changing conditions.

- **Sustained Attention**: The capacity to maintain attention to a situation or task in spite of distractibility, fatigue, or boredom.
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- **Task Initiation:** The ability to begin projects without undue procrastination, in an efficient or timely fashion.
- **Planning/Prioritization:** The ability to create a roadmap to reach a goal or to complete a task. It also involves being able to make decisions about what’s important to focus on and what’s not important.

Executive Skills: Definitions

- **Organization:** The ability to create and maintain systems to keep track of information or materials.
- **Time Management:** The capacity to estimate how much time one has, how to allocate it, and how to stay within time limits and deadlines. It also involves a sense that time is important.
- **Goal-directed persistence:** The capacity to have a goal, follow through to the completion of the goal and not be put off or distracted by competing interests.
- **Metacognition:** The ability to stand back and take a birds-eye view of oneself in a situation. It is an ability to observe how you problem solve. It also includes self-monitoring and self-evaluative skills (e.g., asking yourself, “How am I doing? or How did I do?”).
Where in the brain are executive skills located?
In the frontal lobes (just behind the forehead)

BARKLEY’S THEORY OF ADHD

CONTINGENCY-SHAPED/CONTEXT
DEPENDENT SUSTAINED ATTENTION
VERSUS
GOAL-DIRECTED PERSISTENCE
CONTENGENCY-SHAPED/CONTEXT-DEPENDENT SUSTAINED ATTENTION

A person’s sustained response depends on:

• Novelty
• Intrinsic Reinforcement (Interest) Value
• Extrinsically Provided Consequences

Therefore, if the task is:

• Fun
• Interesting
• Immediately Rewarding

on-task behavior can be sustained (e.g., TV, video games, hands-on activities).

Goal Directed Persistence

Requires the individual to—

• Generate and hold a mental representation of the goal in mind (working memory).
• Formulate a plan and set of rules to follow (self-directed speech).
• Inhibit and regulate negative affect (i.e., disappointment and frustration) associated with self-deprivation.
• Kindle self-motivated or positive drive states in support of the plan (self-regulation of affect).
• Experiment with multiple novel approaches toward goal achievement before selecting one to perform (reconstitution).
THE INDIVIDUAL WITH ADHD HAS DIMINISHED SELF-REGULATION

...therefore sustained attention is highly context and contingency dependent. Without rewards or interest in the immediate context, work is cut short.

THE INDIVIDUAL WITHOUT ADHD HAS ADEQUATE SELF-REGULATION

therefore s/he requires no source of reward or motivation in the immediate context for performance.

Classroom Strategies to Increase Attention

One way to do this:

Be the most exciting thing happening in the classroom
Biological underpinnings

A recent study published by the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) has found differences in dopamine processing in the reward pathways in the brains of subjects with ADHD compared to non-ADHD controls. The study focused on the nucleus accumbens (a brain structure involved with reinforcement and reward) and suggests that people with ADHD may release dopamine at a lower rate compared to normal controls or might have a net dopamine deficit.

Biological underpinnings

Because dopamine enhances the level of interest a person attaches to a stimulus, people who release dopamine at a lower rate might find it more difficult to work up the enthusiasm to act on stimuli they don’t find naturally appealing.

Implication: students with ADHD find it much more difficult to apply themselves to tasks that are not intrinsically interesting to them.
How do executive skills develop?

Through a process called **myelination**. Myelin acts as insulation, increasing the speed with which nerve impulses are transmitted. The faster the impulse, the better the skill.
All skills, including executive skills, improve with practice…

The more you practice, the better the skill. Practice also makes the task less effortful.
Risk-taking in Adolescence

![Figure 1: Age Differences in Risk Preference](image)
The teenage brain is like a Ferrari: it’s sleek, shiny, sexy, and fast, and it corners really well. But it also has really crappy brakes.

Frontal lobes take time to develop...

---

ScienceDaily

Your source for the latest research news

Cognitive Decline Begins In Late 20s, Study Suggests

ScienceDaily (Mar. 20, 2009) — A new study indicates that some aspects of peoples' cognitive skills — such as the ability to make rapid comparisons, remember unrelated information and detect relationships — peak at about the age of 22, and then begin a slow decline starting around age 27.

"This research suggests that some aspects of age-related cognitive decline begin in healthy, educated adults when they are in their 20s and 30s," said Timothy Salthouse, a University of Virginia professor of psychology and the study's lead investigator.

His findings appear in the current issue of the journal Neurobiology of Aging.

Salthouse and his team conducted the study during a seven-year period, working with 2,000 healthy participants between the ages of 18 and 60.

Participants were asked to solve various puzzles, remember words and details from stories, and identify patterns in an assortment of letters and symbols.

Many of the participants in Salthouse’s study were tested several times during the course of years, allowing researchers to detect subtle declines in cognitive ability.

Top performances in some of the tests were accomplished at the age of 22. A notable decline in certain measures of abstract reasoning, brain speed and in puzzle-solving became apparent at 27.

Salthouse found that average memory declines can be detected by about age 37. However, accumulated knowledge skills, such as improvement of vocabulary and general knowledge, actually increase at least until the age of 60.
What Do Executive Skill Weaknesses Look Like in Students?

- Acts without thinking
- Interrupts others
- Overreacts to small problems
- Upset by changes in plans
- Overwhelmed by large assignments
- Talks or plays too loudly
- Resists change of routine
- Doesn’t notice impact of behavior on others
- Doesn’t see their behavior as part of the issue
- Easily overstimulated and has trouble calming down
- Gets stuck on one topic or activity
- Gets overly upset about “little things”
- Out of control more than peers
- Can’t come up with more than one way to solve a problem
- Low tolerance for frustration
- Acts wild or out of control

What Do Executive Skill Weaknesses Look Like in Students?

- Doesn’t bother to write down assignment
- Forgets directions
- Forgets to bring materials home
- Keeps putting off homework
- Runs out of steam before finishing work
- Chooses “fun stuff” over homework or chores
- Passive study methods (or doesn’t study)
- Forgets homework/forgets to pass it in
- Leaves long-term assignments or chores until last minute
- Can’t break down long-term assignments
- Sloppy work
- Messy notebooks
- Loses or misplaces things (books, papers, notebooks, mittens, keys, cell phones, etc.)
- Can’t find things in backpack
What Do Executive Skill Weaknesses Look Like in Younger Students (K-2)?

- Forgets directions
- Forgets to bring materials back and forth between home and school
- Runs out of steam before finishing work
- Chooses “fun stuff” over homework or chores
- Leaves a trail of belongings wherever he/she goes

- Sloppy work
- Loses or misplaces things (books, papers, permission slips, mittens, lunch money, etc.)
- Messy desk/cubby areas/backpack
- Leaves a “paper trail”—scattered around the room

What’s the population we’re talking about?

| Does this pupil have any illness or disability (either physical or mental)? |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| No                          | Yes—please describe        |

What concerns you most about this pupil?

That he is lazy and not working to his potential.

Please describe the best things about this pupil:

He is sweet and has a good sense of humor.
3 Key Strategies for Managing Executive Skill Weaknesses

- Intervene at the level of the environment

- Intervene at the level of the child by—
  1. Teach the child the weak skill
  2. Motivate the child to use the skill
Move from external to internal: critical dimensions

Environmental Modifications for Individual Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task domain/Executive skills</th>
<th>Classroom support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Change the physical environment</td>
<td>• Add barriers (e.g., to avoid runways)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response inhibition</td>
<td>• Seating arrangements (e.g., place distractible kids near teacher, away from windows)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustained attention</td>
<td>• Reduce distractions (e.g., music as white noise)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task initiation</td>
<td>• Use organizing structures (e.g., clear plastic containers with labels; bins for homework; consistent space on blackboard for writing homework)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Environmental Modifications for Individual Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task domain/Executive skills</th>
<th>Classroom support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Change the social environment</td>
<td>• Reduce social complexity (e.g., fewer kids, more adults; supervision on playground; structured play vs. free play)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response inhibition</td>
<td>• Change the “social mix” (seating arrangements in class; special table in cafeteria)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Individual Work System Approach for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder**

*Fig. 1 A left-to-right work system. Tasks are placed on the student’s left and a “finished” container is placed to the student’s right.*
Environmental Modifications for Individual Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task domain/Executive skills</th>
<th>Classroom support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modify tasks</td>
<td>• Make tasks shorter or build in breaks along the way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustained attention</td>
<td>• Make steps more explicit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task initiation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Make steps more explicit
Example: How to listen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LISTENING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Face Speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay Attention &amp; Show Interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep Body Still</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not Interrupt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Environmental Modifications for Individual Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task domain/Executive skills</th>
<th>Classroom support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modify tasks</td>
<td>• Create a schedule, either for a specific event or for a block of time (such as morning work time or the whole day)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustained attention</td>
<td>• Build in variety or choice either for the tasks to be done or the order in which they’re to be done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task initiation</td>
<td>• Make the task closed-ended.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Open-Ended Tasks

An open-ended task is one where:

- There are multiple possible correct answers;
- There are multiple possible ways to achieve the correct answer;
- The task has no obvious starting point; or
- The task provides no feedback about whether or when it is complete.
Impact of task modification on disruptive behavior

Environmental Modifications for Individual Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task domain/Executive skills</th>
<th>Classroom support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Change the way adults interact with the child</td>
<td>• Rehearse with the youngster what will happen and how the youngster will handle it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response inhibition</td>
<td>• Use verbal prompts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional control</td>
<td>• Remind youngster to use checklist or schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>• Praise youngster for using executive skills—Rule of thumb: 3 POSITIVES for each corrective feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working memory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TEACH deficient skills

Don’t expect the child to acquire executive skills through observation or osmosis.

Effective Praise:

1. is delivered immediately after the display of positive behavior;
2. specifies the particulars of the accomplishment (e.g., Thank you for cleaning off your desk right away after I asked you);
3. provides information to the child about the value of the accomplishment (e.g., When you get ready for the first activity quickly, it makes the morning go so smoothly!);  
4. lets the child know that he worked hard to accomplish the task (e.g., I saw you really trying to control your temper!); and 
5. orients the child to better appreciate their own task-related behavior and thinking about problem-solving (e.g., I like the way you thought about that and figured out a good solution to the problem).
TEACH deficient skills

Don’t expect the youngster to acquire executive skills through observation or osmosis.

Example 1:
Goal: A clean room

Directive from parent: *Clean your room*

Response from child with executive skill deficits:
Example 1:  
Goal: A clean room

Directive from parent:  
Clean your room

Response from child with executive skill deficits:  
Nothing

Intervention Plan

Step 1: The parent has to become an external frontal lobe that speaks to the child. It performs the following functions:

- It provides a plan, an organizational scheme, and a specific set of directions.
- It monitors performance.
- It provides encouragement/motivation and feedback about the success of the approach.
- It problem solves when something doesn't work.
- It determines when the task is completed.
Intervention Plan

**Step 1:** Sample statements:
- Let’s start now.
- Put your trucks in this box.
- Put your dirty clothes in the laundry.
- Put your books on the bookshelf.
- There are two toys under the bed. It doesn’t look like all those toys will fit in that one box; we’ll need to get another box.
- When you finish, you can play with your friends.
- I know you hate doing this, but you’re almost done and then you’ll feel great!
- Isn’t it nice to have all your work for the day done?

**Step 2:** Provide the same information without being the direct agent: create a list, picture cues, audio tape, etc. to cue the child.

*Parent says to child: Look at your list.*

**Step 3:** Parent begins to transfer responsibility to child:

*Parent says to child: What do you need to do?*

**Step 4:** Transfer complete.

*Child now asks himself/herself. What do I need to do?*
Example 2: Teaching students how to pay attention

1. Explain that paying attention is an important skill for doing well in school because information cannot be understood or remembered if it isn’t heard in the first place.

2. Ask the class how teachers know when kids are paying attention (eyes on teacher or on the focus of the lesson, raising hands to answer questions, visibly engaged in seatwork, etc.).

3. Talk about what might be acceptable behavior during classroom instruction (e.g., there’s some evidence to suggest that doodling or having something to do with one’s hands while listening makes it easier to retain information).

4. With the class, develop a brief description of what paying attention looks like.

5. Pick a time of day (or specific class activity) where the student will practice paying attention.
Example 2: Teaching students how to pay attention

6. Determine how the skill will be monitored during the practice sessions. Some options are:
   • Set kitchen timer at random intervals and when the bell rings, each student determines if he/she was attending.
   • Use electronic “beep tape” (available from ADD Warehouse or an iPhone app--IntervalMinder) for monitoring attention.
   • Give each student a checklist and asked him or her to periodically self-monitor and indicate on checklist whether he or she was attending.

Paying attention checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Was I paying attention?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example 2: Teaching students how to pay attention

7. Begin practice sessions. Remind the class before beginning the session that they will be practicing paying attention.
8. Debrief with the class afterwards to determine how it went.
9. If necessary, set a class goal and add a reinforcer to enhance motivation to practice the skill.

School-wide example:
Teaching Organizational Skills

Salina Kansas Model

Curtis.Stevens@usd305.com
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Honor Code</th>
<th>CLASSROOMS</th>
<th>HALLS/OUTSIDE</th>
<th>LUNCHROOM</th>
<th>ASSEMBLED CONCERTS &amp; SPECIAL EVENTS</th>
<th>ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES &amp; LOCKER ROOMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HONESTY:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|            | performance as individuals and in groups; truthfulness; integrity;始终坚持诚信；真实；整齐；

| OWNERSHIP: |             |              |           |                                   |                                  |
|            |             |              |           |                                   |                                  |

| COMMUNICATION: | have problems; be open to feedback; be able to express thoughts, feelings, or opinions clearly; to express thoughts, feelings, or opinions clearly;  

| ORGANIZATION: |                        |              |           |                                   |                                  |
|              |                        |              |           |                                   |                                  |

| EQUITY: |              |              |           |                                   |                                  |
|         |              |              |           |                                   |                                  |

**DURING THIS TRAINING SESSION STUDENTS WILL LEARN HOW TO STAY ORGANIZED.**
2 BASIC GOALS

• COMPLETE THE WORK

• TURN THE WORK IN

THE 5 BASIC RULES OF THE BINDER
1. DIVIDE SUBJECTS WITH TABS
2. TRASH ASSIGNMENTS NO LONGER NEEDED
3. PUT DUE DATES ON ALL ASSIGNMENTS
4. POCKET FOR INCOMPLETE HOMEWORK / COMPLETED HOMEWORK
5. KEEP IT WITH YOU ALL OF THE TIME
PROVIDE A VISUAL OF THE WORKLOAD

INCOMPLETE HOMEWORK  
COMPLETED HOMEWORK

IMPORTANT COURSE DOCUMENTS

*KEEP NOTES IN THIS SECTION ON LOOSE LEAF PAPER.

*KEEP ALL ASSIGNMENTS THE TEACHER WANTS YOU TO HAVE YEAR LONG.
PENCIL BAG: PENCILS, ERASERS, PAPER CLIPS, PENS, AND CALCULATOR

LOOSE LEAF PAPER
STUDENT PLANNER/HANDBOOK

Planner needs to be filled out weekly on Mondays.

Write Due Dates at the top of each page.

DUE DATE
4-1-09
HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

INCOMPLETE HOMEWORK

COMPLETED HOMEWORK
Prioritize assignments by due dates.

DUE 3-12-10
DUE 2-12-10
DUE 1-1-10

INCOMPLETE HOMEWORK

STUDENT ALWAYS KNOWS WHERE COMPLETED WORK IS LOCATED.

DUE 2-12-10
DUE 1-1-10

INCOMPLETE HOMEWORK

READY TO TURN IN.

COMPLETED HOMEWORK

COMPLETED HOMEWORK
TURNING THE ASSIGNMENT IN

GRADES

ORGANIZED

STUDENTS LEARN

THAT GRADES ARE

WITHIN HIS/HER

CONTROL

Within my control

Within my sphere of influence

Out of my control

Stephen Covey
# 7th and 8th Grade Monitoring System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Weekend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Hour All 7th and 8th Grade Teachers</td>
<td>All 7th and 8th Grade Teachers During Cougar Time</td>
<td></td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Consistent Monitoring and Assessment of Student Organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Each of the Criteria Is Worth 1 Point(s) Each</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Due Dates: The student writes due dates at the top of all assignments.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Stuffed: The student's binder and textbook do not contain loose papers, and he/she uses the tab dividers and pockets appropriately.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials: The student has all necessary materials for class. (ex. pencil, paper, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planner: The planner is filled out.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete/Incomplete Section: The student's binder contains either a folder or section for complete and incomplete homework.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example: Child with problems with written expression
WRITE A SENTENCE USING FOUR OF THE ADJECTIVES ABOVE.

1. The cat is bright in the dark.
2. The car can go 200 miles per hour.
One day lighting struck a post and fell on a car. Bowen got hurt, then the police came.

Fred is sewing. Then some ting happen and the wire was on fire. He left and ran he out of room. Fred ran down the 6’s floor and the 5; then he told the manager. Then the run up two floors were, they got to the 7 the sewing machine exploded. The end.
7 steps to teaching executive skills

1. Identify specific problem behaviors (messy room, not paying attention).
2. Set a goal (child cleans room independently, children pay attention during instruction).
3. Outline the steps that need to be followed in order for the child to achieve the goal.
4. Whenever possible, turn the steps into a list, checklist, or short list of rules to be followed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>12345</th>
<th>67890</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>012345</td>
<td>67890</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0123456</td>
<td>789012</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0123456789012</td>
<td>3456789012</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0123456789012</td>
<td>3456789012</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7 steps to teaching executive skills

5. Supervise the child following the steps.
   5. Prompt the child to perform each step in the procedure (e.g., *Put dirty clothes in laundry, Put books on bookshelf; Look at teacher while he/she is talking*).
   - Observe the child while s/he performs each step, providing feedback to help improve performance (*You missed 2 toys under the bed*).
   - Praise the child when s/he successfully completes each step and when the procedure is completed as a whole (*Great job tidying your desk! I like the way you kept your eyes on me while I was explaining how to do the math homework*).

7 steps to teaching executive skills

6. Evaluate the program’s success and revise if necessary (e.g., change checklist to drop things that aren’t needed or to add new items)
7. Fade the supervision. (e.g., cue child to start task, look at their checklist, check in periodically rather than being with the child the entire time)
Case example: Managing Behavioral Excesses

Max is a 3\textsuperscript{rd} grade student who, when given an assignment requiring some kind of production (math, writing) does one or more of the following more than 50\% of the time:

- Complains loudly or refuses to do the task \textit{(I don’t know how to do this! Or I’m not doing this stupid paper!)}
- Pushes paper off desk or crumples it
- Roams around room and doesn’t respond to teacher directions

Behavior happens whether or not the task is within his independent ability. The more difficult the task, the more disruptive the behavior.

Interventions were designed after obtaining input from the student.
Managing Behavioral Excesses—Interventions

• A social story describing how he feels and what his options are for helping himself.

In my classroom, our teacher, Mrs. Smith gives us math and writing papers to do. Sometimes when I get one of these papers I get upset. It is important for me to do my schoolwork so I can learn. When Mrs. Smith gives me a paper to do, if I start to get upset I can look at my hard times board. Picking one of the choices will help me to feel better and help me get my work done. If I forget to look at the board, Mrs. Smith will help me remember.

• A “hard times” visual board with his options listed.

HARD TIMES BOARD

Triggers: What Makes Me Mad---
1. When I get a math or writing paper to do

“Can’t Do’s”
1. Complain in a loud voice.
2. Crumple or tear up my paper.
3. Not listen to my teacher.

When I’m Having a Hard Time, I Can:
1. Ask for help.
2. Take a break for 2 minutes and look at a book or draw.
Managing Behavioral Excesses—Interventions

- Shorter tasks with check-in breaks at end of each section with teacher or paraprofessional.
- After work or directions are given, an adult checks with him immediately to ask if he understands or needs help.
- His agreement that if he begins to get upset and does not remember to use his hard-times board, he will accept a cue from an adult to make a choice from it.

Managing Behavioral Excesses—Interventions

- A rule that if his behavior disrupts class, he will take an out-of-class break for at least two minutes and whatever time after that until he is able to resume his in-class plan.
- His agreement that uncompleted work will be finished during free time or, if needed, at the end of school.
Managing Behavioral Excesses—Interventions

- An incentive system allowing him to earn points which he can use to buy computer time, a highly preferred activity, at the end of the morning and at the end of school. Points are awarded in descending value with 3 points awarded for independent work completion, 2 points given for some initial complaining but his initiation of using the hard-times board, 1 point for his needing an adult to initiate use of the board and 0 points for leaving class.

Managing Behavioral Excesses—Intervention Training

The components of this plan were rehearsed with him in the classroom with the paraprofessional and teacher role-playing 1st and then walking him through the procedure with cues until he could independently demonstrate how it would work. He and staff agreed on a starting time for the plan and at the beginning of the day and on returning from lunch, the plan was reviewed by his reading the social story.
Use incentives to augment instruction.

Incentives make both the effort of learning a skill and the effort of performing a task less aversive.

Furthermore, putting an incentive after a task teaches delayed gratification.

Two Kinds of Incentive Plans: Simple and Elaborate
Simple Incentives

- Give the child something to look forward to doing when the effortful task is done (we call that Grandma’s Law).
- Alternate between preferred and non-preferred activities (use simple language: First...then, e.g., *First work, then play*).
- Build in frequent, short breaks (depending on the child’s attention span, breaks could come every 10 minutes and last 5 minutes).
- Use specific praise to reinforce the use of executive skills: Rule of thumb: 3 positives for each corrective feedback.

A few additional pointers…
Modify task demands to match the youngster’s capacity for effortful work

Some tasks are more effortful than others—this is as true for adults as it is for children.

Provide the minimum support necessary for the youngster to be successful.

Two equally weighted components:
- Minimal support necessary
- For the youngster to be successful

If too much support is provided, the youngster won’t become independent. If too little support is provided, the youngster won’t be successful.
Provide supports and supervision long enough for the youngster to achieve success.

A general rule of thumb is that it usually takes longer for a youngster to master a task or skill than people think it should.

The desired end point: the youngster can perform the task independently without reminders. If the end point has not been reached, then some support and supervision will be required.

References


References


References


