

Learn it Today – Use it Tomorrow!

Cutting Edge Strategies to Improve Executive Function Skills

How to Teach Students to Efficiently Initiate, Transition, Plan and Manage their Tasks, Time Space and Materials (and keep their emotions in check!)

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Sarah Ward, M.S., CCC/SLP is returning once again to CA to teach special educators, teachers, psychologists, social workers, SLP's, OT's, parents and professionals hands-on practical strategies to improve Executive Function skills. Whether you've seen her before, or this is all new, you're sure to walk away with new ideas and strategies to help you better assist clients, students, or your own children.

This seminar is all about providing dozens of practical strategies that you can learn today and implement tomorrow! From task initiation and execution to time management, practice using strategies such as 'Future Sketch', 'Get Ready, Do, Done', 'STOP and Read the Room', and seeing and sensing the passage of time.

During these Workshops through demonstration and practice you will learn how to teach students the following executive control skills:

-  **Awareness:** to "Tune in" to what is happening around them so they can understand how information, events, and their actions will impact their goals and objectives, both now and in the near future
-  **Forethought:** to predict the successful outcome of tasks and to know what a 'stop spot' looks like
-  **to Wait:** to control a reaction long enough to contemplate the outcomes of their choices
-  **Planning Skills** to estimate how long tasks will take, to be able to sense the passage of time and to know how to break down the steps for immediate tasks, nightly homework and long term projects
-  **to Shift:** Fresh approaches to help students develop automaticity for class routines and fluidly transition from one mental mindset to another and to be able to stop doing one activity and then move on to and be prepared to start new tasks
-  **to Pace:** to speed up or slow down within a given time frame, to complete tasks within allotted time and to persist on tasks even if the tasks are difficult, boring or nonpreferred
-  **Flexibility:** to consider multiple possible solutions to problems, to see the "gray" in a situation and to avoid having black and white or rigid thinking
-  **Speed of Information Processing:** to help students quickly react to incoming information, understand it, and think about the information, formulate a response or plan, and then execute

Topics:

Future Thinkers: A New View of Executive Function Skills

Gain a new understanding on how students demonstrate executive function skills and a new perspective on what is meant by the term "executive dysfunction". Learn the 360 Thinking Executive Function Model. Understand the relationship between motivation and executive control. The premise of executive function therapy and how to ensure strategies generalize.

Self-Regulation and Situational Awareness

Improving self-regulation: He has done this task before! In fact he just did it an hour ago. Why can't he do it now? Understanding and treating the underlying executive control skills for task motivation, initiation and output.

- Practice teaching students to develop situational awareness skills so they can "stop and read a room" and self-regulate their behaviors for a given situation.
- Learn how students can think in an organized and flexible way about systems and then self-initiate to manage their clothes, backpack, papers, personal belongings in personal and shared spaces.

Teach Students to be a Mind MIME:

- Learn how to help students truly create mental visual imagery for the future and to perform a mental dress rehearsal to sequence actions towards a goal and hold that prospective memory in mind while they execute and self-monitor through tasks
- Learn how to increase a student's spatial temporal window or how far into the future they can see and sustain prospective planning.

Being a Beat Ahead: Following Routines, Initiating Tasks, Making Transitions

1. Teach student to Develop a "memory for the future",
2. Decrease Prompts! Increase the independence with which students can self-initiate, transition, control their behaviors and impulses to complete tasks with less supervision and fewer prompts. increase a student's ability to fluidly transition from one mental mindset to another and to switch from a current task to being prepared for a new task

Time and Task Management

Teach students to internally sense the sweep of time and to self-monitor to sustain concentration, manage pace and complete tasks in allocated time frames.

- Teach students to create and stick to time markers; identify and manage time robbers
- Show students the process of how to plan homework that lasts more than an hour, or must be completed over days and or weeks. Helping students to plan and effectively utilize time in a resource room/learning skills/homework center

The Get Ready * Do * Done Model

Do what you do...just make one tiny tweak and turn the core classroom objectives and tasks into powerful tools to teach students executive control skills for classroom and treatment interventions.

The 'Get Ready * Do * Done' program teaches students the process of how to visualize simple, multi-step and complex tasks and assignments and then sequence and plan the requisite steps to fully complete work.

- Teach students how to break down complex tasks and assignments and then plan for, organize and initiate tasks
- Long Term Project Management is a challenge for students with executive dysfunction as they struggle to see into the future to plan ahead for completing the smaller parts of the project. Learn how to help students visually break large projects into smaller steps, to estimate time to complete and schedule these steps, to visually learn the impact of procrastination and to prioritize steps of the project.
- Generalizing the Get Ready*Do*Done process to independent planning

What you will learn

After completing this program, you will be able to . . .

1. State the functional working definition of what is meant by the term “executive function skills” as it pertains to therapeutic interventions
2. Be able to identify what is the typical developmental course of the executive function skills and how to assess and identify Executive Dysfunction
3. Define how situational awareness, self talk, forethought , gesture/movement and episodic memory are the foundational skills for successful task execution
4. Develop an intervention program to foster a student’s ability to form more independent executive function skills by describing therapeutic activities to improve:
 - a. Situational awareness and forethought
 - b. Task planning, task initiation and transition within and between tasks
 - c. Active self management of the factors related to the passage of time
 - d. Organized thinking
 - i. Describe at least 4 systematic methods that can be used in the classroom in conjunction with the core curriculum to enhance self-regulation, information processing and task completion
5. State the 4 features of situational intelligence and the 4 features of mimetic ideational information processing that are the foundational executive function skills.
6. Describe 4 methods for teaching a student how to visualize and plan hourly time and prioritize tasks across multiple hours/days
7. List 3 interventions to teach a student how to visualize complex tasks and then sequence and plan the requisite steps to complete assigned work including written expression

Sarah Ward, M.S., CCC/SLP has over 24 years of experience in diagnostic evaluations and treatment of executive dysfunction. Ms. Ward holds a faculty appointment at the Massachusetts General Hospital Institute of Health Professions. Sarah is an internationally recognized expert on executive function and presents seminars and workshops on the programs and strategies she has developed with her Co-Director Kristen Jacobsen. Their 360 Thinking Executive Function Program received the Innovative Promising Practices Award from the National Organization CHADD. She has presented to and consulted with over 600 public and private schools in Massachusetts and across the United States.