**Lazy Kid or Executive Dysfunction?**

By: Tracy Landon and Linda Oggel (2002)

Do you have a student who seems incredibly lazy? Intentionally forgetful? Absolutely unmotivated? Deliberately late? Do you feel like a broken record? Constantly asking where his homework is? Constantly asking him to clean out his desk? Constantly asking her to pick up stuff around her desk? Do you have a student who is chronically distracted? Are you repeating directions to get the student back on task when he gets distracted? Do you have a student who knows the information but can’t seem to communicate it to you in a logical sequence? Do you ask a question and get an answer that’s related but not quite connected to the question? If so, it might be that the student is not using these behaviors intentionally.

One of the least studied and most frequently overlooked contributors to academic and behavioral problems is a problem in the frontal lobes of the brain known as executive dysfunction (Parker, 2001). Students with executive dysfunction have problems of a neurobiological nature that particularly affect “planning, flexibility, organization, and self-monitoring (Ozonoff, 1998, p.282). These students may have “difficulty picking a topic, planning the project, sequencing the materials for a paper, breaking the project down into manageable units with intermediate deadlines, getting started, and completing the activity. And because these students frequently underestimate how long something will take, they’ll generally leave the project until the night before it is due” (Packer, 2001, p. 2). Just imagine how difficult it would be if you had trouble organizing your time, materials, belongings, thoughts or any combination of these!

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