

Late, Lost and Unprepared: A Parent's Guide to Helping Children with Executive Functioning

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Chapter 1

1. Why is Executive Function (EF) so important for you to understand? How might EF help your child/students?

Chapter 2

1. The author shares a story about Robin, a woman who lives life without the benefits of strong executive function skills. Think of an individual you know who experiences some of the same difficulties Robin exhibits. Which of the executive function skills listed on pages 12-13 have you noticed in this individual? Provide an example of a situation for each one you list.

Chapter 3

1. Many times parents blame themselves for their child's executive function weaknesses. As an educator, what are some ways you can educate parents about executive function to help them understand they are not to blame? Or, as a parent, how can the information in this chapter help a parent not blame themselves?
2. A table of developmental tasks requiring executive skills for various age levels are listed on pages 23-24. Look through the age level you support and discuss a strategy or strategies you could use to help strengthen one of the developmental tasks.

Chapter 4

1. There are many demands that are placed on a child while they are in school. For students with executive weaknesses, the school day can be even more challenging. Think of at least 3 behaviors we expect from children at school and explain how

weak executive function skills can impact the performance of the behavior at school.

2. Why is homework a difficult time for parents and their children with executive dysfunction? What can we as educators do to help support families with this challenge? As a parent, what are some ideas in this chapter that would be helpful for your child?

3. What are some things that families can do to help their children with a night time routine? Why is it important for families to provide structure and routine at bedtime?

4. Why are some individuals with weak impulse control at significant risk for social difficulties? Give one example of when a student/child with weak impulse control had a social difficulty.

5. Although it is important to help students/children understand their weaknesses, it is also important for us to convey these do not define them as a person. What can educators/families do to help support this message?

Chapter 5

1. What can families do to seek out support for understanding about their child's weakness in executive function?

2. Many times having a child with a disability can put a strain on the family unit. Siblings often feel left out, and spouses feel pressure from the other trying to balance time spent with each other. What are some ideas or strategies families can use to help balance the needs of the family unit?

Chapter 6

1. Why is it important to generate an individualized profile of strengths and challenges in order to be able to develop specific plans to help a child with executive dysfunction skills?

2. Explain the assessment process when determining a child's executive functioning skills, including who can conduct the assessment(s).

Chapter 7

1. Many times specialized interventions are needed to help build academic skills for students with weak executive function

skills. Provide an example of a time when you needed to modify a task or provide an accommodation such as allow extra time for a student/child to complete their assignment. What were the results of you making the special accommodations for the student/child?

2. What are some of the characteristics in an individual with ASD that may impact their executive function skills?

Chapter 8

1. Why is it important for individuals with weak executive function skills to be self aware of their challenges and not to rely solely on their families for support?

2. Why is it important that we build short term and long term goals when designing interventions related to executive function deficits?

3. Explain the importance of providing a prosthetic environment while executive function skills are still developing.

Chapter 9

1. Using punishment for children with working memory weaknesses is ineffective. Explain why taking a teaching approach is much more effective in helping the child learn the desired behavior.

2. Explain why positive reinforcement is beneficial in helping students/children with weak executive function skills. What are some reinforcement strategies you implement in your classroom or home to assist those with weak executive function skills?

Chapter 10

1. Explain this statement: "Executive Dysfunction is a performance disability: there is a gap between ability/knowledge and independent consistent behavior." How does this apply to your students?

2. Over time it is important to fade supports to help your student/child learn to complete tasks independently. Provide 2-3 examples of ways you can fade supports.

Chapter 11

1. Impulse control is critical to having self-regulation. Not all children are able to internalize rules and control their behaviors. General strategies to help your student/child control impulses are listed on page 100. Choose two from the list that you use most in your classroom or home and explain how you use them.

2. Read the following case study about a student who is struggling with controlling impulses. Then, choose 4-5 strategies the author provided in this chapter, to implement for this student. Explain why you might utilize those particular strategies.

Jaymar is a seventh grader who attends all general education classes at his middle school. Jaymar does not come to school prepared. He often forgets homework assignments, doesn't finish class assignments in time and struggles organizing materials throughout the day. When the teacher approaches him about not having his work completed in time and his lack of unpreparedness, Jaymar becomes agitated to the point of throwing books and sitting on the floor. He does not respond to the teacher's verbal requests to get back to his seat and complete work. Jaymar will also kick others' seats while they are trying to do their work. Jaymar will also interrupt the teacher during instruction by shouting out how frustrated he is.

Chapter 12

1. Of the strategies listed to help a child shift gears, which one have you used the most? Which one would be the most helpful for your individuals with executive function challenges?
2. When you have a child or student who has difficulty with unexpected changes in his/her day, how can you help other adults and peers know how to support your child/student throughout those changes?

Chapter 13

1. Children who struggle with initiating homework and tasks need some external supports. What supports in this chapter are new ideas to you? How can you incorporate these new ideas?

2. Positive reinforcement is an evidence based practice that can help build new skills. How have you and your colleagues/family members used positive reinforcement to build skills in students/children who need help with starting activities and projects?

Chapter 14

1. One of the strategies suggested for remembering directions is to sing the directions or tap for each direction given. Have you tried either of these strategies? If yes, describe how you used it and if it worked. If no, how could you use them?
2. What practices have you found most successful to assist students/children in planning for complex, multi-step tasks/activities/projects?

Chapter 15

1. How can you include some of the strategies from this chapter as part of your overall planning to support all students? Which strategies would be most helpful for all while assisting students who struggle with organization?
2. Describe how you have used a template, checklist, or visual map to organize a project/assignment/activity for students. How can these tools assist a student/child?

Chapter 16

1. What ideas for self-monitoring from this chapter do you see as helpful for use with your students/child?
2. List and describe one low-tech strategy and one high-tech strategy for supporting self-monitoring.

Chapter 17

1. Share two tips you use to help students move from external supports to building missing skills. How do you maintain that balance?
2. Teachers can assist families in building a team who can help teach their child executive function skills. How would you help

a family build a team? What possible members could be on the team?