




Understanding and Managing Anxiety, Executive Functioning, and Challenging Behavior for Children and Teens

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Agenda



- Anxiety: What does it mean for children and teens?
- What is Executive Functioning?
- When Anxiety and Executive Functioning Difficulties Lead to Behavioral Challenges: What can we do?

What does anxiety mean for children and teens?





What is Typical?

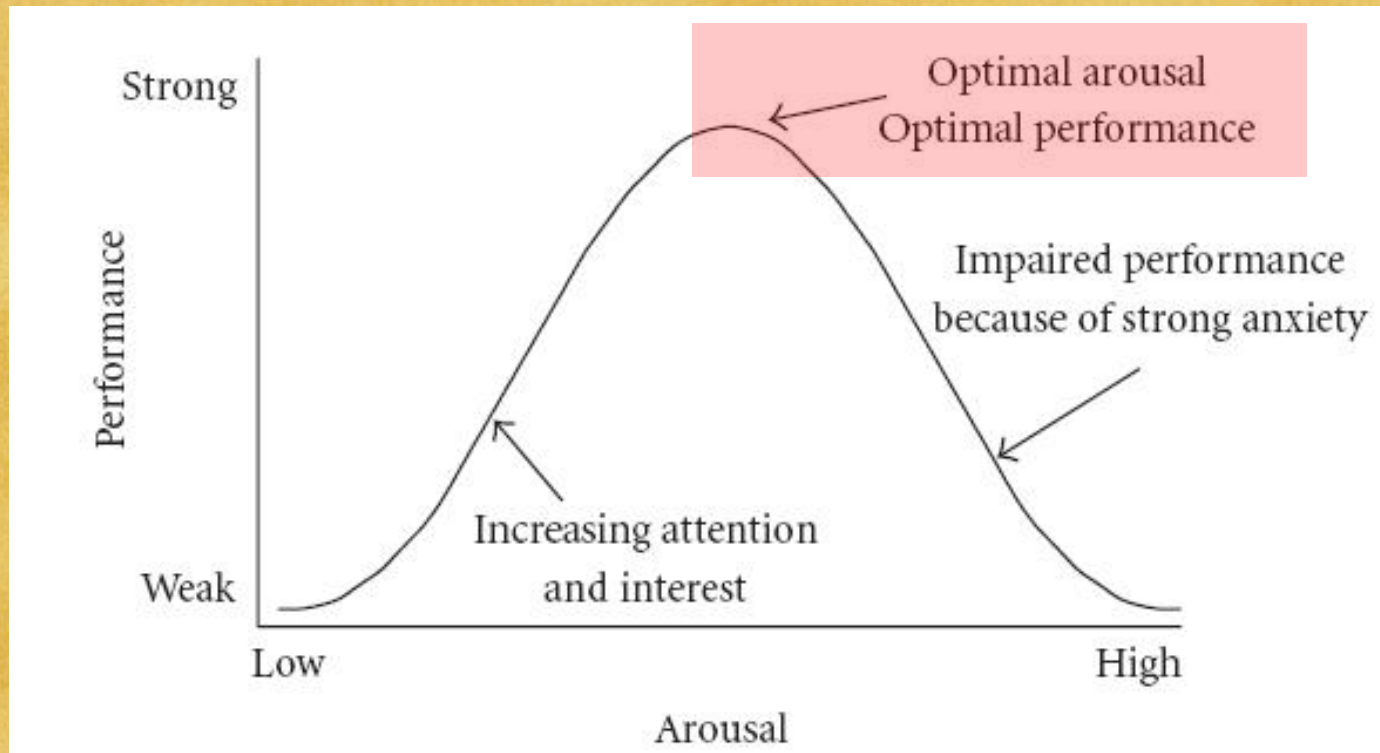


All adults experience worry, fear, and nervousness regularly. Our children experience similar emotions.

- ❧ May occur around a big event
- ❧ May occur when experiencing something for the first time
- ❧ May occur when they experience us as being nervous

Why We Worry?

Research shows some nervousness/worry is needed for optimal performance



Yerkes Dodson law, 1908, Yerkes & Dodson

Too little or too much arousal hinders performance.

Typical Expressions of Worry or Nervousness in Children

- ∞ Verbal expression of worry/doubt
 - ∞ Difficulty going to sleep
 - ∞ Clingy behavior
 - ∞ Heart races/pounds
 - ∞ Butterflies in stomach

**** ALL OF THIS IS TEMPORARY****

The Difference Between Typical Worries and Anxiety Problems

- ❧ *Children with anxiety problems cannot control their worry.*
- ❧ *Anxiety is chronic.*
- ❧ *A “fight or flight” instinct is triggered and prolonged.*
- ❧ *Across multiple settings such as at home, in school, and in the community*
- ❧ *Impacts 1) physiological, 2) cognitive & 3) behavioral*

Physiological Impact

- ❧ Sympathetic nervous system activates and releases adrenaline (epinephrine)
 - ❧ Racing heart
 - ❧ Hyperventilation, shortness of breath
 - ❧ Flush/paleness
 - ❧ Digestion slows/ceases, nausea
 - ❧ Dry mouth and eyes
 - ❧ Pupils dilate
 - ❧ Bladder relaxes
 - ❧ Reflex speed increases
 - ❧ Shaking

Cognitive Impact

- ❧ It is not the sight of the threatening scenario that → anxiety, but how we interpret the scenario
- ❧ Characterized by:
 - ❧ Negative interpretations, catastrophic thinking
 - ❧ Inflexible, all or nothing, black/white thinking
- ❧ Anxious individuals tend to focus first on threatening information rather than the broader context, including non-threatening information

Behavioral Impact

❧ AVOIDANCE/ESCAPE or ACTING OUT

- ❧ Refusal to start or complete activity
- ❧ Rush through work or tantrum to escape
- ❧ Remain in isolation rather than join social group
- ❧ Aggression, self-injury, elopement

❧ Why it can be problematic:


- ❧ Reinforces idea that feared scenario is dangerous or bad
- ❧ Prevents child from having opportunity to learn that situation can be tolerated/is safe
- ❧ Erodes confidence in ability to cope with this and other stressful situations
- ❧ Long-term reduction in self-esteem and generalized insecurity

How Does a Child Arrive Here?

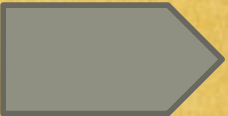
Why Do Anxiety Problems Occur?

- ❧ Exposure to a traumatic event that he/she does not entirely understand/comprehend – Overwhelms the neurological system
- ❧ Biological/genetic predisposition to anxiety/depression – In the Family
- ❧ A major change in the family prompted a sense of lack of safety and/or security


Identifying Unhelpful Anxiety: RED FLAGS



Frequency: occurs every day or multiple times daily for 6 + months



Object or situation: seems harmless to most people




Intensity: extreme reactions like screaming, crying, eloping



Degree of avoidance: going to extremes



Anxiety cannot be reasoned away



Impacts daily functioning: for child and/or family

“Fight” Response in the Classroom

Goal of the anxious child = Feel in control as a means of decreasing anxiety

- ❧ Irritable with teachers or peers
- ❧ High Levels of frustration
- ❧ Engagement in power struggles to exert control
- ❧ Noncompliance/Oppositionality
- ❧ Talking back
- ❧ Kicking, Biting, Screaming (Tantrums)
- ❧ Rigidity/Perfectionism

“Flight” Response in the Classroom

Goal of the anxious child = make anxious situation go away in order to cope

- ❧ Avoidant of homework completion
- ❧ Avoiding Class/School Altogether
- ❧ Wish to leave the room often
- ❧ Lack of participation
- ❧ Withdrawal
- ❧ Lack of Concentration and Attention
- ❧ Refusal to Speak

Strategies to Help Begin the Conversation

Remember, anxious kids have an underlying fear that they are not safe, that something bad might happen to them or to someone in their lives.

1. Remain CALM and CONTROLLED when you speak to your child about their anxiety.
2. Help them understand what they are feeling:
“I think you are experiencing anxiety. Anxiety occurs when you struggle to manage your worries and they begin to feel out of your control.”
3. Help to reassure them that they are safe, that you as parents are in control, but that you aren't going to avoid this.
“We will help you learn to face your fears and be brave.”

Tips for parents: What NOT to do

❧ 6 key ways parents inadvertently model anxious behavior

❧ **Questioning:** “Do you want me to come with you?”, “Do you think you can manage ___?”
“Do you want me to check for you?” → suggests there may be something to worry about, that child may not be able to handle

❧ **Checking:** checking homework rather than allowing child to learn from mistakes, helping make project “perfect”

Tips for parents: What NOT to do

❧ 6 key ways parents inadvertently model anxious behavior (continued)

❧ **Safety seeking/overprotective behavior:**

❧ Child gets upset about being late so parent ensures they always arrive 15 minutes early

❧ Child gets upset about losing so parent ensures child wins

❧ Parent asks teacher to exempt child from task that frustrates child

❧ **Avoidance:** parent chooses to keep child home from school/field trips/choral concert

Tips for parents: What NOT to do

❧ 6 key ways parents inadvertently model anxious behavior (continued)

❧ **Reducing independence:** complete activity for or with child rather than allow him to try it alone and possibly fail; always accompany child on all playdates, birthday parties etc.

❧ **Paying too much attention to non-brave behavior:** child runs away when he is not picked to be first and parent comforts and offers treat






Permitting avoidance

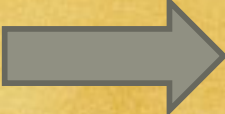


- ❧ Child is less likely to become distressed in the short term
- ❧ The longer the child avoids the anxiety-provoking scenario the stronger the anxiety becomes
- ❧ Child does not have the opportunity to experience that scenario is not as stressful as he perceives

Encouraging bravery

- ☞ Likely to result in  anxiety, at least initially
- ☞ However, if anxious person regularly experiences object of anxiety, he will gradually learn to cope and anxiety will 
- ☞ Usually associated with  challenging behavior at first
- ☞ Family must be prepared to tolerate increased challenges in the short term

Benefits of encouraging bravery

- ❧ Short term pain  long term gain
- ❧ Child develops better coping skills
- ❧ Child experiences less anxiety in the long term due to better coping
- ❧ Child develops better independence
- ❧ Child is more likely to develop self-confidence and positive self-esteem

The Anxiety Dilemma:

Encourage bravery or permit avoidance

Issue	Encourage bravery?	Permit avoidance?
Loud noise	Do I gradually desensitize child to sounds he fears?	Do I avoid taking him near any loud noise?
Homework	Do I break HW into small steps for him to complete?	Do I explain to teacher that HW is too stressful and all work must be completed in school?
Animals (e.g., dogs)	Do I have child spend more and more time with dogs?	Do I only take him to play in parks where dogs aren't allowed?
Losing	Do I play games she loses to teach her to cope better?	Do I avoid games she could lose?
Compulsions (shut doors)	Do I prevent child from shutting all doors each night?	Do I allow child to shut all doors so she will relax?
Changes in routines	Do I gradually introduce more changes in routines to promote better coping?	Do I try to avoid changes to routines to avoid confusion and distress?

12 things parents CAN do

1. Praise brave behavior

- ☞ We may comfort kids when they are distressed but leave them alone when they seem OK
- ☞ Try noticing brave, confident, independent behavior
- ☞ Make sure you use specific labels
- ☞ You can pair praise with tangible reinforcers (e.g., sticker chart) if that seems particularly motivating

12 things parents CAN do

2. Pay close attention to brave behavior & independence

- ☞ Praise involves verbal attention, but you can also reinforce bravery and independence in other ways: smiles, high-fives, fist bumps, sitting close by and watching eagerly, etc.
- ☞ Idea is to pair positive experiences with engaging in brave and independent behavior
- ☞ It is important that the pairing be immediate and not delayed

12 things parents CAN do

3. Set goals

- ❧ It is easy to become overwhelmed and to think fears are insurmountable
- ❧ It helps to break the worry down into smaller, more realistic and achievable steps
- ❧ Once child conquers a small goal, he will feel more confident about tackling a more challenging task
 - ❧ Example: Fear of spiders
 - ❧ 1. listen to someone read a story about spiders
 - ❧ 2. look at pictures of spiders online
 - ❧ 3. watch a video of spiders online
 - ❧ 4. watch a spider from across the room
 - ❧ 5. watch a spider up close in a contained area (cage)
 - ❧ 6. watch someone handle a spider
 - ❧ 7. touch a small spider
 - ❧ 8. hold a small spider

12 things parents CAN do

4. Proportional rewards

- ☞ May plan these ahead of time or surprise the individual with rewards
- ☞ Rewards \neq bribes (what we give someone when we want her to do something to benefit us)
- ☞ Rewards should be immediate and given each time a goal is achieved

12 things parents CAN do

5. Emotion coaching/Validation

- ❧ Important to acknowledge when child is feeling anxious or worried
- ❧ Child is more likely to listen to advice if she feels she is understood
- ❧ Key elements:
 - ❧ 1. be aware of child's emotions
 - ❧ 2. recognize opportunity for intimacy and teaching
 - ❧ 3. listen empathetically and validate child's feelings
 - ❧ 4. label emotions in words child can understand
 - ❧ 5. help child discover appropriate ways to deal with the situation

12 things parents CAN do

6. Planned ignoring of non-brave behavior

- ❧ After acknowledging the emotion, move away
 - ❧ Avoid answering repetitive questions
 - ❧ Avoid responding when child asks you to participate in compulsive behavior
 - ❧ Limit affection to child in tantrum over losing a game
 - ❧ Limit conversation when child tries to engage you about why she can't/won't do homework

12 things parents CAN do

7. Model brave behavior

☞ How are you managing your own anxiety?

☞ Anxious parents = anxious kids

☞ Helpful to talk through brave behavior so the model is clear

“I have to give a big presentation tonight in front of a lot of people. I am going to stay calm and take big breaths to help myself feel more relaxed and confident.”

☞ Children can look for brave behavior in favorite TV characters

12 things parents CAN do

8. Role reversal

☞ Get the child to tell you how to manage an anxious scenario

☞ We are more likely to follow advice if we give the advice ourselves

☞ Ask for help

☞ To your child: “I saw that scary dog today and worried he might bite me. I’ve seen you taking some big breaths when you feel scared. Can you show me what you do? I think that may help me feel more confident when I have to walk past him.”

☞ To your adolescent: “I’ve been thinking about getting everything ready for the party next week and I don’t feel confident I will get it all done. You seem pretty good at staying calm when you have lots of school work to do. What do you tell yourself to help get everything done?”

12 things parents CAN do

9. Allocate responsibilities and encourage independence = CONFIDENCE

- ❧ Find opportunities within the home for child to take on extra job or responsibility that she can complete alone
- ❧ Praise the child for her independence in accomplishing the task
- ❧ Emphasis is on independence, not completing the task perfectly
- ❧ Set the child up for success by choosing something within her grasp

12 things parents CAN do

10. Allow and encourage mistakes

- ❧ Sometimes this is really hard, particularly if child is vulnerable due to having other special needs
- ❧ Encourage and reward child for trying and coping with failure instead of preventing her from entering a scenario in which failure may happen
- ❧ Allow child to join a team even if you know motor coordination will be difficult
- ❧ Encourage child to attend a birthday party where team games and competitions may be involved
- ❧ Allow adolescent to call a classmate to invite her to the movies even though she may say no
- ❧ Take the eraser away so child cannot repeatedly erase answers on math worksheet

12 things parents CAN do

11. Teach problem solving skills

Confidently spend some time brainstorming, preparing, and practicing how things might go...

1. **PREPARE** - what can you expect?
2. **PREVIEW** - what might it look like, feel like, sound like, etc.?
3. **PRACTICE** - do a run through, role play

Make sure you are not perseverating on the problem, you are problem-solving

12 things parents CAN do



11. Schedule worry time

(“Thinking time”, “Problem solving time”)

- ☞ Useful if child’s discussion of his worries is repetitive, time consuming, interfering
- ☞ Set a specific time slot during which worries can be discussed and problems solved
- ☞ Reassures child that worries will be addressed
- ☞ Sets limits on discussing worries at other times
- ☞ Discussion more likely to occur when child feels calm and rational than if she brings it up on her own

What is executive functioning?





A Day In The Life

Meet Josh, a 6th grader who has executive functioning issues:

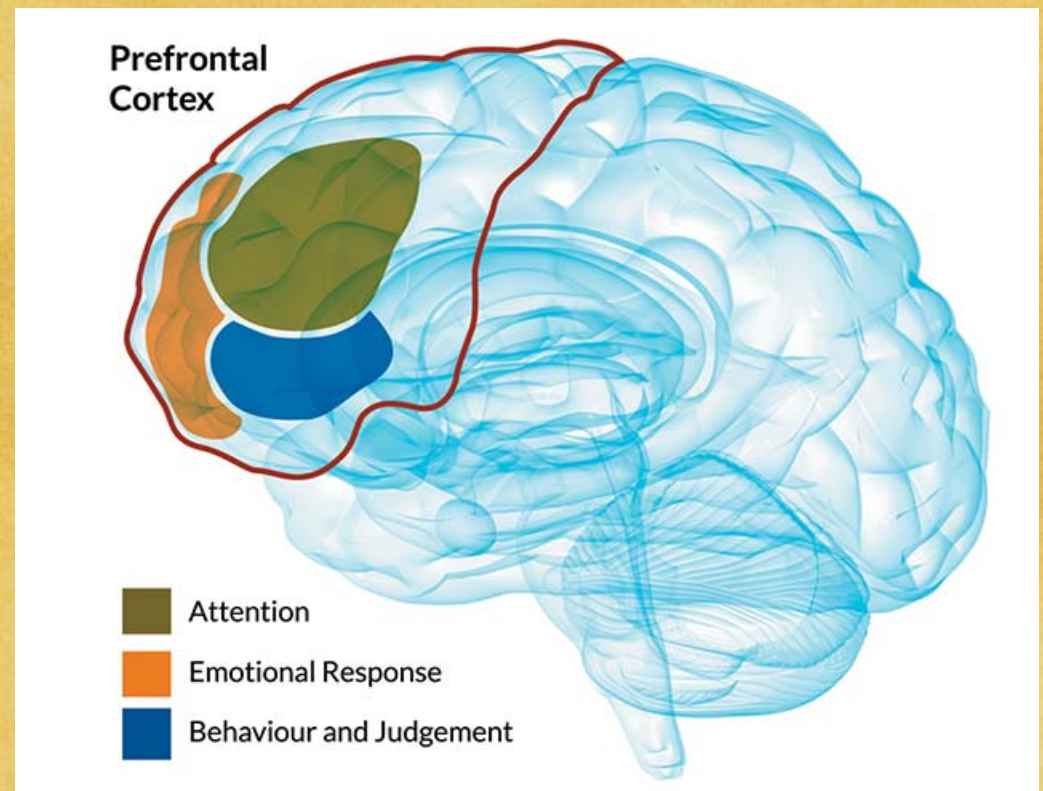
- ☞ 7am – Josh knows he is forgetting something...
- ☞ 11am – Josh's teacher asks...
- ☞ 1pm – It's the best part of the school day: lunch!
- ☞ 3pm – At soccer...
- ☞ 6pm- Josh isn't happy...
- ☞ 8pm – After lots of prodding....
- ☞ 10pm – When Josh finally begins the book report...
- ☞ 12am – Its way past his bedtime.

What is Executive Function?

- ☞ A set of mental skills that work together to help a person achieve goals
- ☞ Regulation and Organization of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors

Etiology

- ☞ **Neurology:** A common assumption is that disrupted executive control processes are associated with pathology in prefrontal brain regions
- ☞ Primary literature shows executive functions are associated with both pre-frontal activation and communication between the pre-frontal cortex and other areas of the brain





Other Causes



- ❧ **Genetics:** Studies of related conditions have shown certain genetic characteristics occur with high frequency in families where one or more family member is affected
- ❧ **Environmental Conditions:**
 - ❧ Linked to other common behaviors, such as smoking or drinking during pregnancy, as well as other obstetrical complications
 - ❧ Babies with low birth weight may have an increased risk
 - ❧ Children who have had head injuries, particularly an injury to the frontal lobe, are at risk
 - ❧ Young children who are exposed to lead or other environmental toxins such as pesticides early in life may also have a higher risk

“Diagnosis”

- ❧ Executive planning is often one of the criteria for disorders like ADHD and autism
- ❧ But experts haven't decided how executive dysfunction should be defined on its own as it often does not occur in isolation
- ❧ It's not a recognized category in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM), which outlines the criteria and symptoms that psychologists and other professionals use to make a formal diagnosis

Remains a clinical judgment that clinicians make based on the information they obtain using the methods they choose to obtain it

Co-Occurring Conditions

Autism Spectrum Disorder

ADHD

Learning Disabilities

Fetal Substance Exposures

Mood Disorders

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Inhibition / Impulse Control

Ability to stop and think before acting; to stop one's own behavior at the appropriate time, including stopping actions and thoughts.

- ❧ May blurt things out.
- ❧ May do unsafe things without thinking it through.
- ❧ Likely to rush through homework without checking it.
- ❧ May quit a chore or task halfway through to go see friends or other preferred activity.
- ❧ Have trouble following rules consistently.
- ❧ Seem not to learn from consequences.



Shift / Flexible Thinking

Ability to move freely from one situation to another and to think flexibly in order to respond appropriately to the situation.

- ❧ Can't "roll with the punches" or come up with new approaches when a plan fails.
- ❧ Think in very concrete ways.
- ❧ Fail to see other options or solutions.
- ❧ Find it difficult to change course, adjust to a change in plans, or tolerate unanticipated changes.
- ❧ May get panicky and frustrated when they're asked to do so.
- ❧ Become rigid about doing things one specific way.
- ❧ May lack perspective-taking skills

Emotional Control

Ability to modulate emotional responses by bringing rational thought to bear on feelings (linked closely to impulse control).

- ❧ Struggle to manage feelings by focusing on the end result or goal.
- ❧ Often have trouble accepting negative feedback.
- ❧ Often overreact to little or perceived injustices.
- ❧ May struggle to finish a task when something upsets them / to regroup when things go wrong.





Initiation



Ability to get started on a task or activity.

- ❧ Often have issues with planning and prioritizing, too.
- ❧ Without having a plan for a task, it's hard to know how to start.
- ❧ Can come across as lazy or as simply procrastinating.
- ❧ But often so overwhelmed at not knowing where to begin that they freeze and do nothing.
- ❧ Struggle to independently generate ideas, responses, or problem-solving strategies.



Working Memory

The capacity to hold information in mind for the purpose of completing a task.

- ❧ Have trouble with multi-step tasks.
- ❧ Have a hard time remembering directions, taking notes or understanding something you've just explained to them – even if you have repeated the information multiple times.
- ❧ You frequently may hear, “I forgot what I was going to say.”

*This is different from rote memory (e.g., the grocery store scenario)

Planning / Organization

Ability to manage current and future- oriented task demands (e.g., to come up with the steps needed to reach a goal and to decide their order of importance).

- ❧ May not know how to start planning a project.
- ❧ Easily overwhelmed trying to break tasks into smaller, more manageable chunks.
- ❧ May have trouble seeing the main idea.
- ❧ May not know which parts of a project are most important.
- ❧ Often lose their train of thought
- ❧ Deficits are most evident in producing a written product

Organization of Materials

Ability to impose order on work, play, and storage spaces.

- ❧ Struggle to keep track of things, physically and mentally.
- ❧ Constantly loses or misplaces things.
- ❧ Personal spaces are messy.
- ❧ Leaves a trail of belongings for others to pick up.
- ❧ Can't find a way to get organized even when there are negative consequences to being disorganized.





Self-Monitoring



Ability to monitor one's own performance and to measure it against some standard of what is needed or expected.

- ❧ Struggle to keep track of and evaluate own performance on regular tasks.
- ❧ Lack self-awareness.
- ❧ Can't tell if strategies are working - may not even realize they have strategies!!
- ❧ Often don't know how to check their work.
- ❧ May be surprised by a bad grade or negative feedback.
- ❧ Fail to recognize the impact of their behavior on others



Evaluation



- ❧ How can we measure executive function deficits???
- ❧ Within a psychological or neuropsychological evaluation, a variety of tests are performed, information is obtained from primary care givers, observational data is collected, etc. to assess the student's abilities
- ❧ We ALL have deficits in these areas. The goal is to determine how much deficits interfere with the student's success in different areas of his or her life functioning
- ❧ No single test can identify dysfunction. Rather, a licensed health professional needs to gather information about the child, and his or her behavior and environment.

Executive Functioning and the Steps of Writing

Plan:
Develop an
outline
based on
the topic

Organize
ideas

Inhibit and
Monitor
Diversions:
Do not go
off on
tangents

Sustain
task
attention
and effort

Monitor:
Assess
outcomes
against
plans

Edit: Make
changes
as needed

Executive Functioning and the Steps of Writing

Working Memory

- ☞ Hold and work with information in immediate awareness.
- ☞ Think about all the processes involved in writing!
 - ☞ Meaning, purpose, audience, syntax, semantics, sequence, organization, and often the lower level skills of spelling, and mechanics.

Organization

- ☞ Essential versus non-essential information
- ☞ Logical order that matches purpose
- ☞ Cohesion
- ☞ Coherence



Writing Supports



- ❧ Non-fiction or expository writing is most important
- ❧ Use graphic organizers (e.g., match one to each type of text)
- ❧ Explicit instruction to teach:
 - ❧ Sentences
 - ❧ Paragraphs
 - ❧ Longer text structures (e.g., 5 paragraph essay)

*An amazing resource for this type of strategic instruction is Teaching Basic Writing Skills by Judith Hochman

Helpful Strategies

Working Memory

- ☞ Make it visual and sequential! (Agenda books, Outlines, Visual prompts, Visual schedules, Checklists)
- ☞ Notes to view while listening (fill-in-the-blank)
- ☞ Make information meaningful
- ☞ Pair verbal directions with written directions
- ☞ Verbal Rehearsal: Teach students to verbally rehearse the steps required for appropriate task completion

Emotional Control

- ☞ Reduce stimulation in environment
- ☞ Maximize routine / predictability
- ☞ Model calm affect in response to child
- ☞ Emotional previewing (e.g., what is your plan if you feel frustrated?)

Helpful Strategies

Sustained Attention

- ❧ Reduce distractions
- ❧ Preferential seating
- ❧ Getting student's attention before giving directions / Cueing the student to attend because directions are about to be given
- ❧ Break tasks into small segments
- ❧ Use a timer, other cues
- ❧ Incorporate student interests
- ❧ Include student frequently, give jobs
- ❧ Provide movement and listening breaks
- ❧ Task interspersal

Initiation

- ❧ Predictable routines
- ❧ Behavioral Momentum
- ❧ Pair with peer with stronger skills
- ❧ Set up timelines and short-term goals
- ❧ Allow some choice points
- ❧ Help students get started on tasks and then allow them to complete independently
 - ❧ Gradually back up how much of the task is teacher or parent assisted

Helpful Strategies

Planning and Organization

- ☞ Provide clear/explicit directions
- ☞ Provide rubrics and models
- ☞ Chunk tasks in smaller segments, with check points to monitor progress
- ☞ Provide task check list in sequential order
- ☞ Workspace with minimal distractions
- ☞ Organizational systems
 - ☞ E.g., color folder system

Time Management

- ☞ Provide schedule to follow
- ☞ Use routine check list with time limits
- ☞ Use timers
- ☞ Give time parameters for assignments

Helpful Strategies

Flexibility

- ☞ Reduce novelty, preview changes
- ☞ Provide warning before transitions
- ☞ Provide “dry run” for new activities
- ☞ Systematic, gradual exposure to new tasks
- ☞ Pre-teaching for new concepts

*Often improves as other EF skills develop

Other

- ☞ Use simple, brief directions
- ☞ Speaking slowly and clearly
- ☞ Varying vocal volume to encourage attention
- ☞ Check for attention and comprehension by following directions or other verbal exchanges with a question
- ☞ Repeat important comments made by others to ensure the student has heard them



Behavioral Treatments



Self-Monitoring

- At various intervals, teaching students to check in on their attention levels
- May teach student to ask a specific question, such as, “What did my teacher/parent just say?”
- Begin by having student receive reinforcement for collecting accurate data
- Once that is achieved, create specific criteria for gaining access to reinforcement



Behavioral Treatments



❧ Curbing impulsivity by:

❧ Teaching students to stop, think, identify choices, identify consequences of choices, select one, and act

❧ **SODAS** (a strategy developed by Boys Town)

❧ Describe the **Situation**

❧ List 3+ **Options** for handling the situation next time

❧ For each options, list the **Disadvantages** and **Advantages**

❧ Determine the best **Solution**

Behavioral Treatments

- ☞ Promote impulse control with “Cognitive Scripts”
- ☞ Provide specific guidelines for how to behave in certain situations (particularly

	<u>Be Kind</u>	<u>Be Respectful</u>	<u>Be Safe</u>
On Facebook	Think about how others might feel. Only post things that are kind to others.	Only post things you would want your _____ (mom, dad, grandma, boss, teacher, etc.) to read.	Keep your personal information private. Report to an adult anything that makes you feel uncomfortable.



Behavioral Treatments

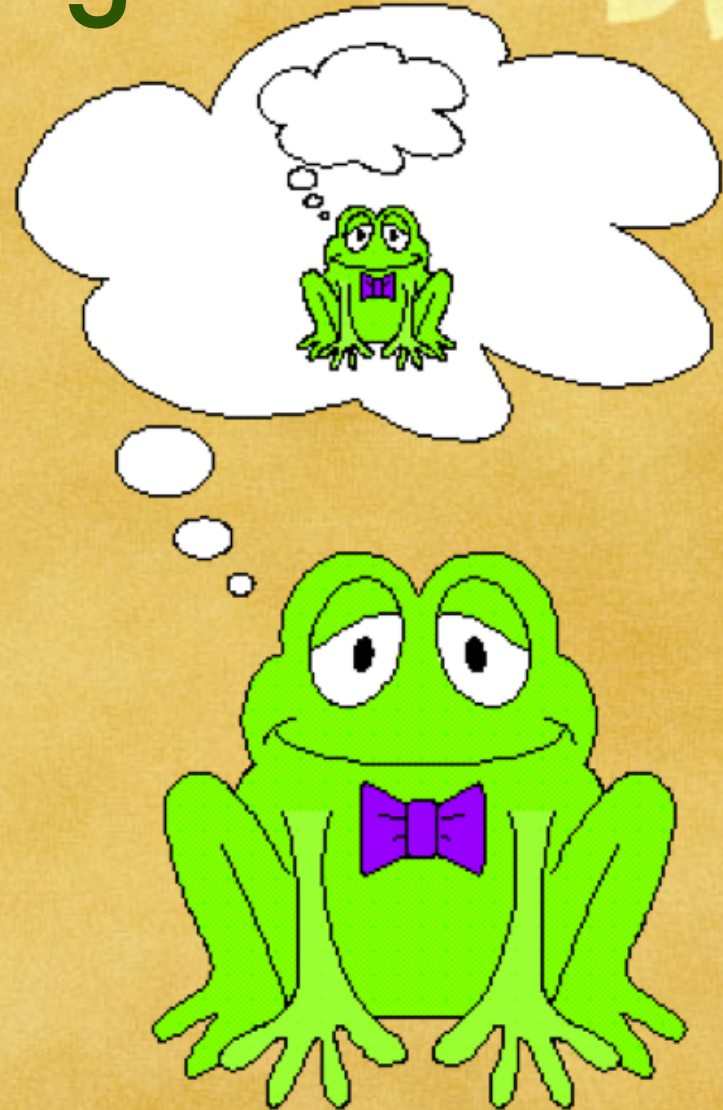


- ☞ Reinforcement strategies for encouraging desired behavior / use of strategies
 - ☞ Sticker charts for appropriate task completion
 - ☞ Could also target initiating tasks in a reasonable amount of time
 - ☞ Behavioral economy

- ☞ Plan-Do-Review

Teaching Meta-cognitive Skills

- ❧ Setting up short-term goals and self-administered contingencies
- ❧ Defining adaptive self-statements that promote flexibility and emotional regulation
- ❧ Making a study plan and establishing work routines
- ❧ Setting up good organizational habits



Independence is the ultimate goal!

- ❧ Students need to learn what strategies will work for them, how to implement them independently, and when to use them
- ❧ This will involve some supported trial-and-error
- ❧ Skill development should follow the process of:
 - ❧ Teaching the executive skill directly
 - ❧ Repeated guidance in using the skill until it becomes a part of the student's repertoire
 - ❧ Fading prompts / support systematically until the student is able to demonstrate the skill independently
 - ❧ Providing incentives / contingencies to motivate the use of the strategies in daily activities



Challenging Behaviors



- ❧ Difficulties with Anxiety and Executive Functioning can lead to challenging behaviors
 - ❧ They are not, however, the ONLY reasons challenging behaviors occur



Challenging Behaviors



- ❧ All behavior serves a function for individuals
- ❧ Individuals engage in behavior that “works for them” in the moment
- ❧ Treating challenging behavior means shifting the environment to support prosocial behavior



Challenging Behaviors



❧ Four basic functions of behavior

❧ Attention

❧ Escape

❧ Tangible

❧ Automatic



Challenging Behaviors



- ❧ First understand WHY the behavior is happening
- ❧ Determine whether the behavior is a CAN'T do or a WON'T do
 - ❧ If can't – teach the necessary skills
 - ❧ If won't – work on motivation

If In-home Strategies Do Not Work

Get School Support

- ❧ School staff can help your family establish a plan if your child is refusing to go to school
- ❧ Work with your school to bring your child in over the summer to visit
- ❧ Seek specialized support from school staff if your child's anxiety is impacting their ability to learn

If In-home Strategies Do Not Work

Get Professional Support

- ❧ Call your pediatrician and seek advice
- ❧ Seek out guidance from a trained social worker or psychologist who works with children
 - ❧ Most child mental health workers will also work closely with parents and pediatricians to facilitate change at home and in school
 - ❧ A social worker or psychologist can help you determine if additional services, such as medication, increased school support, or ongoing therapy may be warranted

What Happens in Therapy?

- ❧ Teaches your child about things that are challenging for them – psychoeducation
- ❧ Helps your child make connections between their experiences and their emotions
 - ❧ Gives your child coping “tools”
- ❧ Allows them to express their anxieties and challenges in a safe environment

CCSN Behavioral Health, LLC

☞ **Highly Specialized Services**

- ☞ Treatment for severe behavior
- ☞ Skills-acquisition training for children with ASD
- ☞ Treatment of comorbidities to ASD
- ☞ A feeding, sleep, and elimination disorders clinic
- ☞ Individual, family, and sibling therapy
- ☞ Parent-training
- ☞ Group therapy
- ☞ Occupational therapy

☞ **Center-based Treatment**

- ☞ All of our clinicians work together at the same site
- ☞ Access to training and supervision
- ☞ Access to multidisciplinary treatment as needed

☞ **Multidisciplinary Staff** Trained and Experienced in ASD and Related Disorders

- ☞ Psychologists, BCBAs, BTs and OT

☞ **Family Access Through Insurance**

- ☞ Commercial insurance and HUSKY provider



Thank You!

CCSN: The Center for Children
with Special Needs

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