

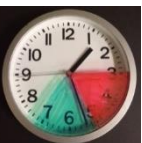
Executive Function Skills: Initiating

Struggles:

- Beginning a task or activity
 - Knowing when to begin, how to begin,
- Beginning a task in a timely manner - procrastination
- Initiating subsequent tasks especially when slow to begin the first
- Dependent on others to initiate or begin activities
- Can ***appear*** unmotivated or noncompliant
- Can result in prompt dependence or learned helplessness
- Longer projects – may wait until the last minute to complete (science fair, research projects, quarterly projects, presentations, or other culminating activities)

Intervention options:

- Use an individualized [visual schedule](#) or “to do” list for the student so the student knows the order of classes, events or activities
- Create a [visual to do list](#) for individual assignments or activities so the student understands the order
- Monitor the students’ energy or arousal level: [\(antecedent based intervention\)](#)
 - For student with low energy, they may benefit from some vestibular activities to help increase energy levels
 - For students that are high energy or overactive, heavy work or proprioceptive sensory activities can have a calming effect
- Have an appropriate peer [cue/prompt](#) the student to begin, *reinforce* task initiation
 - Gradually fade external cues from staff or peers as student invitation improves - this can be used as a future example (visual) for the student to refer to if needed!
- Have an adult or peer work the student through the first step, question or problem
- Provide the student with a sample of the finished product even for academic tasks such as essays, diagrams or math problems [\(antecedent based intervention\)](#)
- Work student areas of interest into activities and lessons [\(antecedent based intervention\)](#)
- Chunk assignments into smaller sections and provide breaks or **REINFORCEMENT!** after completion of each section or a set number of sections
 - Visually define the chunks with a set of colors or numbers
- Set a [visual](#) timer for the student after the final directions have been given to cue the student to start the task
 - For secondary tasks, set the timer again so the student knows when to end the first task and initiate the second task or color that section of the analog clock with a different color
- Establish a structured work system for independent work or times where the student needs to independently begin a task
- **PAIR INITIATION WITH REINFORCEMENT!**



Resources:

- [SSJCSS Links to graphic organizers arranged by subject/category](#)
- [Online Visual Timers](#)
- [How to use post-it notes on your windows desktop for lists](#)
- [SSJCSS sensory resources](#)
- [PBIS World – Reinforcement/Reward Systems](#)
- [PBIS World – Data tracking resources](#)
- [Forced Choice Reinforcement Survey](#)

Apps:



[First Then Visual Schedule \(\\$9.99\)](#) -



[First Then \(\\$2.99\)](#)



[360 Thinking Time Tracker](#) app to help with time management



[Finish \(free\)](#) allows you to make lists for different purposes, create due dates with a quick easy calendar



[Wunderlist \(free\)](#) – you can create lists and SHARE the list with others – so a teacher can create a list for an assignment and share it with the student.

References:

Smith-Myles, B. (2016) Individuals with ASD who present with behavior and executive function challenges: practical solutions. [training handout]. *Indiana Resource Center for Autism: Indiana Institute on Disability and Community. Bloomington, IN.*

Ward, Sarah. (2016) Executive Function Skills in the Classroom. [training handout]. *Indiana Department of Education, Indiana IEP Resource Center. Indianapolis, IN.*