

Executive Function Skills: Prioritizing

Struggles:

Sequencing

- Knowing what to do first or where to start in a sequence of actions or events (routine, written, “unwritten” rule or other situations)
- Sequence of conversation (peers, adults, teachers)
- Knowing how much time is left and how to allocate that time effectively
- Fully understanding the final product or expectation

Significance or Importance

- Procrastination: understanding the need to not wait until the last minute
- Distinguishing between what is emergent, immediate and what can wait
- Time management: how much time to spend on something
- Knowing when to move on from one task
- Breaking down expectations or tasks into smaller chunks
- Importance: understanding which task or assignment is most important
- Project planning – what to do first, what is critical, what can wait
- Choose appropriate activities to complete within given time limits or established deadlines

Intervention options:



- [Visual](#) checklists for organization of materials, individual assignments, and/or routines for home and school then number or color code the checklists
- Develop a system for color coded (with highlighters or post its) for notetaking or organization within a planner (assign each class a color). Establish specific colors for what to do first, second and so on . . . ([visual support](#))
- Work with the student to differentiate between what is urgent and what is important
- Prime student for an assignment or activity: ([antecedent based intervention](#))
 - Get Ready , Do, Done model
 - Work with the student develop the list, then work with the student to prioritize and/or number steps, list steps visually, even on a calendar
- Provide the student with a rubric for an assignment to see what is considered “most important” to the teacher, also to identify the final product expectations, review the rubric with the student and have the student highlight important information to remember ([antecedent based intervention](#), [visual support](#))
- Color code specific steps within an assignment with highlighters or post it notes for the student to know what to do first ([visual support](#))
- Use graphic organizers to help students prioritize what information to pull from the fiction or non-fiction text, to organize thoughts or sequence events ([visual support](#))
- Provide student with sample finished products (for academic tasks as well) to understand the final goal ([antecedent based intervention](#))
 - Work with the student to identify what information was included (what was most important)
- Provide student with an excellent example of class notes:

- Review the notes with the student to help identify and evaluate what information was considered important
- Or provide student with an outline prior to taking notes with key words as clues to help the student identify when to take notes
- Work with the student to develop an outline for taking notes:
 - i.e. – look for bold face words, titles, key concepts identified at the beginning of the chapter, look at the review questions at the end of the chapter or section before listening to the lecture or reading the chapter
- Teach student to group tasks or activities together to increase efficiency, use visuals to identify groups and tasks, and number tasks, steps or activities for sequential order
- Use visual timers to prioritize and support time management ([visual support](#))
 - Use an analog clock with dry erase markers to divide time up between tasks, assignments, to alternate between work and break
 - Identify how much time should be spent per activity or task
- Work to help students prioritize with “Beginning, Middle, End” or “First, Next, Then , Last”
- Identify parts of a student’s routine and then differentiate between what a student “wants” to do vs. what the student “needs” to do
- **PAIR WITH REINFORCEMENT!** ([reinforcement](#))

Resources:

- [SSJCSS Links to graphic organizers arranged by subject/category](#)
- [Online Visual Timers](#)
- [Free printable homework charts](#)
- [How to use post-it notes on your windows desktop for lists](#)
- [Google keep – create to do lists and posts its that link between your google account and device\(iPhone, android tablet, iPad\)](#) Establish certain colors with certain priorities (immediate vs can wait)
- <https://jillkuzma.wordpress.com/teaching-ideas-for-executive-function-skills/>

Apps:

-  **30/30 (free)** – This app helps users prioritize and track the amount of time for individual tasks, create a visual schedule with built in breaks, choose individual times for different tasks and breaks
-  **Istudiez** - The weekly and monthly overviews on the interactive calendar can help keep track of due dates and group study sessions, and the app’s Cloud Sync integration assures that all compatible devices can access the same scheduling information.



- **ihw Homework (\$1.99)** - Assignments can have title, due date, reminder, a grade, notes, and you can even add a partner. Once entered, assignments can be viewed by day, week, or course.



- **iRewardChart Lite (iPad free)** – this chart allows parents to choose the “other” category within the app to reward students for achieving set organizational goals.



- **Complete Class Organizers (\$4.99)** – This app allows students to organize classes but also allows students the ability to take notes, record lectures, and track grades.



- **360 Thinking Time Tracker App** - This is the app that goes along with the Get Ready, Do, Done method from 360 Thinking Cognitive Connections.



- **Plan It, Do It, Check it Off (\$2.99)** – This is a to do list app that uses pictures (actual photos) to represent the things on the to do list. There are 26 pages of pictures or you can use your own. You can add text to the pictures as well and then add a check mark to show what has been completed.



- **Idea Sketch (free or upgrade for \$3.99)** – create concept maps, mind maps, flow charts with the option to convert those to a text outline or list. Great for planning projects, making lists or outlines.



- **Functional Planning System (\$4.99 with additions)** - the Functional Planning System utilizes video modeling to help children (and adults) create visual to do lists. Choose from a video library through in app purchases or create your own videos and step by step sequences for tasks that need to be completed daily or in preparation for a new task.



- **My Job Chart (free)** - My Job Chart is an easy-to-use app that helps children of nearly all ages and abilities stay organized and on-task at home. Family members each create their own profile within the app. Parents/adults can assign tasks and award points. This app uses a point system for completed chores, and users can choose to save, share or spend their points. Parents/adults can customize the reward system by offering non-monetary rewards, like “having a friend over”, “extra computer time”, or they can offer retail rewards through Amazon.com.



References:

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