

Executive Function Skills

Focusing, Sustaining and Shifting Attention



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Struggles with Focusing, Sustaining and Shifting Attention

Focusing Attention:

Knowing and understanding - on who (person) or what you should focus / Controlling Distractibility

- The conversation next to you or the teacher during instruction
- Filtering out background noise, random thoughts, and other movement around you

Looking at the important information in text

- Distinguishing between what is relevant and irrelevant
 - Keeping the relevant in the foreground and the irrelevant in the background



Struggles with Focusing, Sustaining and Shifting Attention

Sustaining/Maintaining Attention:

- Staying on topic, filtering out other thoughts and ideas
- Managing disinterest boredom – not zoning out
- Listening without interruption
- Screening out sensory distractions or stimulus



Struggles with Focusing, Sustaining and Shifting Attention

Shifting Attention – or Redirecting Focus:

- Changing the current topic of discussion, especially if it is an area of interest
- Moving on from a preferred activity, assignment or “special interest area”
- Transitioning from one assignment to the next (especially if the first is not complete)
- Actual physical movement from one area/activity to the next



Intervention Options:






Provide student with a structured learning environment (visual support)

- Tight physical structure and organization helps reduce distraction and transition time helping students stay on track
- Physical structure also reduces distraction and anxiety because activities are located in predicable settings and locations





Have **visual expectations** for the different activities in the classroom and prime these expectations BEFORE the different activities (antecedent based intervention & visual support)

Teach Different Expectations for Different Activities





Whole Group Expectations

- ☐  Look At The Teacher
- ☐  Quiet
- ☐  Sit
- ☐  Raise Hand
- ☐  Hands and Feet to Self



Seat Work Expectations

- ☐  Sit at Desk
- ☐  Quiet
- ☐  Raise Hand
- ☐  Hands and Feet to Self

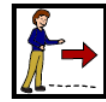
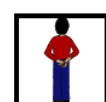


Read Aloud Expectations

- ☐  Look At The Teacher
- ☐  Sit on the Carpet
- ☐  Quiet
- ☐  Hands and Feet to Self

Station Expectations




- ☐  Whisper Voices
- ☐  Walk to Your Station
- ☐  Clean Up Your Station
- ☐  Put Papers in Your Folder

Line Up Expectations

- ☐  Walk To Get In Line
- ☐  Hands and Feet to Self
- ☐  Quiet
- ☐  Leave Space Between People

Develop a work system ([visual support](#)) for the student during independent work times or other times, as identified through data, that the student struggles to say on task

Identify, what work, how much work, and what do I do when I am finished

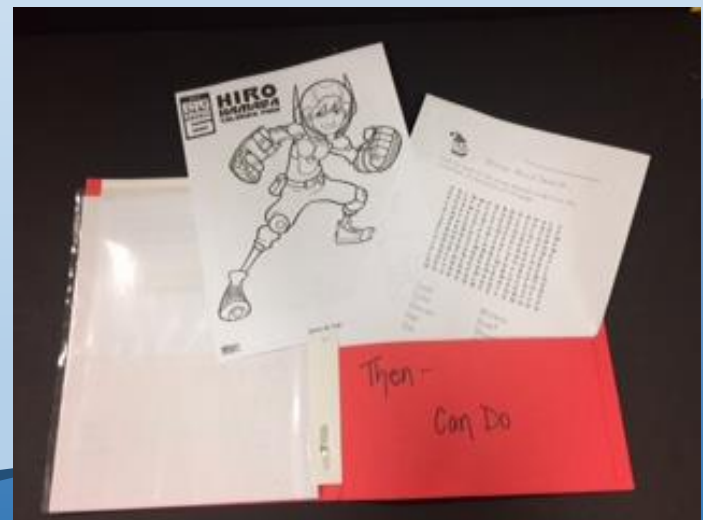
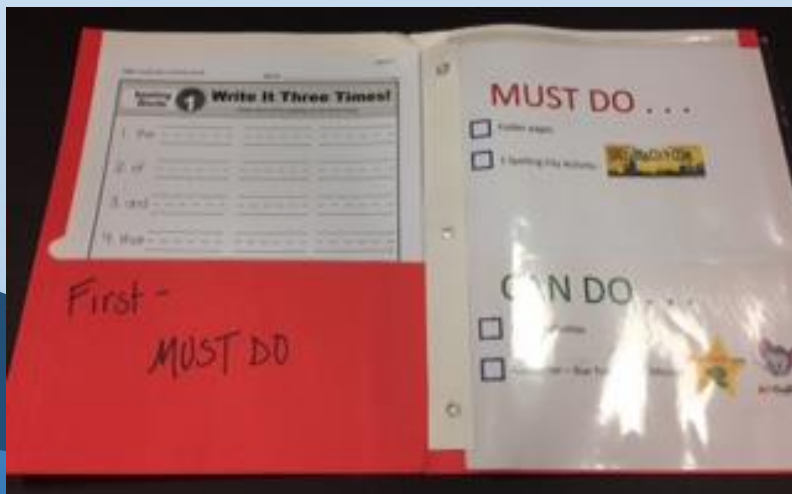
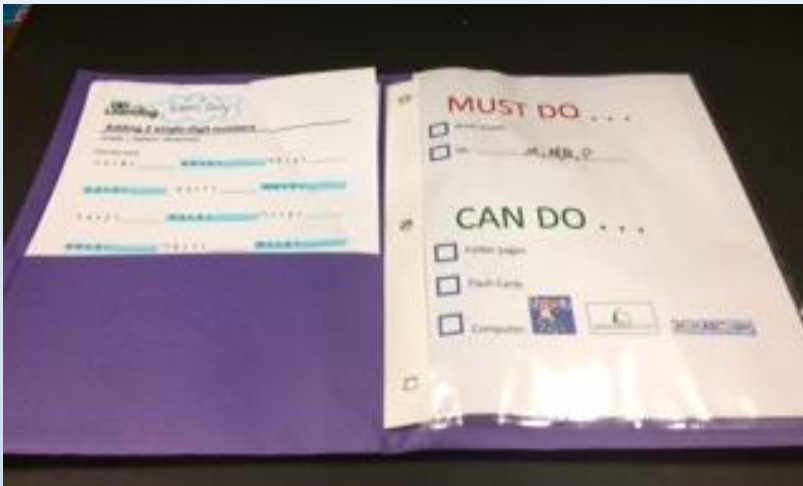
What do I do? 	Complete the math problems (Hints to the different steps)
How much do I have 	Complete the odd problems, 1-25 Show your work
What do I do when I am finished? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you do not finish, put it in your green take home folder• If you do finish turn it in to the blue tray• You can read or work on other homework

Sometimes it isn't the what, but the how! (reduce transitions, predictable format for completion, known system for work completion.)



Intervention Options

Must do - Can do folders – Students complete the **MUST DO** portion of the folder before they are allowed to move on to the **CAN DO** portion containing more preferred activities and choices.



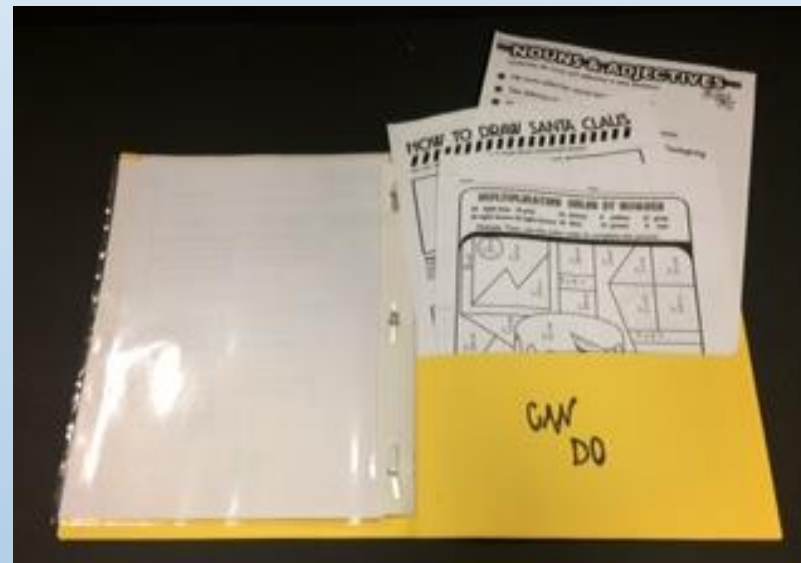
The image shows an open notebook with a yellow cover. On the left page, there is a yellow sticky note with the words "MUST DO" written in black marker. The notebook is open to a page with a "Must Do" list and a calendar. The left page has a "Must Do" list with a yellow sticky note. The right page has a calendar grid with dates 1, 2, and 3, each containing a list of tasks.

Must Do List (Left Page):

- 1. [Task]
- 2. [Task]
- 3. [Task]
- 4. [Task]
- 5. [Task]
- 6. [Task]
- 7. [Task]
- 8. [Task]
- 9. [Task]
- 10. [Task]
- 11. [Task]
- 12. [Task]
- 13. [Task]
- 14. [Task]
- 15. [Task]
- 16. [Task]
- 17. [Task]
- 18. [Task]
- 19. [Task]
- 20. [Task]
- 21. [Task]
- 22. [Task]
- 23. [Task]
- 24. [Task]
- 25. [Task]
- 26. [Task]
- 27. [Task]
- 28. [Task]
- 29. [Task]
- 30. [Task]
- 31. [Task]

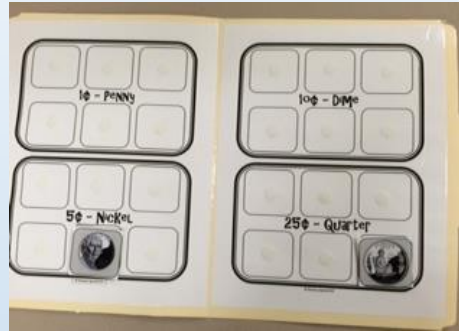
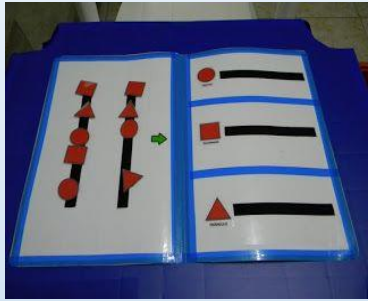
Calendar (Right Page):

Month	Must Do	Must Do
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. [Task] 2. [Task] 3. [Task] 4. [Task] 5. [Task] 6. [Task] 7. [Task] 8. [Task] 9. [Task] 10. [Task] 11. [Task] 12. [Task] 13. [Task] 14. [Task] 15. [Task] 16. [Task] 17. [Task] 18. [Task] 19. [Task] 20. [Task] 21. [Task] 22. [Task] 23. [Task] 24. [Task] 25. [Task] 26. [Task] 27. [Task] 28. [Task] 29. [Task] 30. [Task] 31. [Task] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. [Task] 2. [Task] 3. [Task] 4. [Task] 5. [Task] 6. [Task] 7. [Task] 8. [Task] 9. [Task] 10. [Task] 11. [Task] 12. [Task] 13. [Task] 14. [Task] 15. [Task] 16. [Task] 17. [Task] 18. [Task] 19. [Task] 20. [Task] 21. [Task] 22. [Task] 23. [Task] 24. [Task] 25. [Task] 26. [Task] 27. [Task] 28. [Task] 29. [Task] 30. [Task] 31. [Task]
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. [Task] 2. [Task] 3. [Task] 4. [Task] 5. [Task] 6. [Task] 7. [Task] 8. [Task] 9. [Task] 10. [Task] 11. [Task] 12. [Task] 13. [Task] 14. [Task] 15. [Task] 16. [Task] 17. [Task] 18. [Task] 19. [Task] 20. [Task] 21. [Task] 22. [Task] 23. [Task] 24. [Task] 25. [Task] 26. [Task] 27. [Task] 28. [Task] 29. [Task] 30. [Task] 31. [Task] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. [Task] 2. [Task] 3. [Task] 4. [Task] 5. [Task] 6. [Task] 7. [Task] 8. [Task] 9. [Task] 10. [Task] 11. [Task] 12. [Task] 13. [Task] 14. [Task] 15. [Task] 16. [Task] 17. [Task] 18. [Task] 19. [Task] 20. [Task] 21. [Task] 22. [Task] 23. [Task] 24. [Task] 25. [Task] 26. [Task] 27. [Task] 28. [Task] 29. [Task] 30. [Task] 31. [Task]
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. [Task] 2. [Task] 3. [Task] 4. [Task] 5. [Task] 6. [Task] 7. [Task] 8. [Task] 9. [Task] 10. [Task] 11. [Task] 12. [Task] 13. [Task] 14. [Task] 15. [Task] 16. [Task] 17. [Task] 18. [Task] 19. [Task] 20. [Task] 21. [Task] 22. [Task] 23. [Task] 24. [Task] 25. [Task] 26. [Task] 27. [Task] 28. [Task] 29. [Task] 30. [Task] 31. [Task] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. [Task] 2. [Task] 3. [Task] 4. [Task] 5. [Task] 6. [Task] 7. [Task] 8. [Task] 9. [Task] 10. [Task] 11. [Task] 12. [Task] 13. [Task] 14. [Task] 15. [Task] 16. [Task] 17. [Task] 18. [Task] 19. [Task] 20. [Task] 21. [Task] 22. [Task] 23. [Task] 24. [Task] 25. [Task] 26. [Task] 27. [Task] 28. [Task] 29. [Task] 30. [Task] 31. [Task]

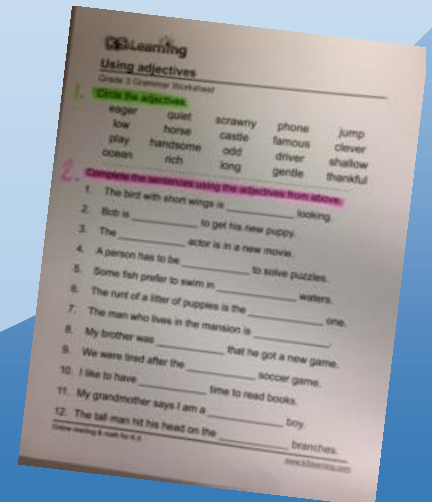


Intervention Options

Stabilize materials for independent work times: structured file folders or structured tasks with visual instructions, clarity and organization



Develop a color coded system (with highlighters or post its)
establish specific colors for what to do first, second and so on . . .
(visual support) and number them



Intervention Options

Set a goal for mid-way when working during class, then using a visual timer complete a check in at the mid-way point for a student to check their progress:

- Reinforcement for meeting goal
- Identification of **“time robbers”** if behind

Break down larger assignments and develop a visual list of tasks/activities to do and pair with a set time for completion, due date or time frame, or place dates/times on a blank calendar

- Pair on time completion with reinforcement



Mid-point check in



Use graphic organizers to assist with keeping student on topic, in sequential order and to organize work.

Did you	YES	NO
use capital letters?		
write neatly?		
write a topic sentence?		
write at least 3 supporting sentences?		
write an ending sentence?		
use punctuation?		
use good spelling?		
indent your paragraph?		
write in sequential order?		
use details?		
write about the topic?		

Sandwich Chart

Write your topic at the top. Add details to the middle layers. Add a concluding sentence at the bottom.

Topic: _____

Detail: _____

Detail: _____

Detail: _____

Concluding Sentence: _____

Name _____ Date _____

Comparing Concepts

Directions: Use this compare/contrast organizer to explore analogous as well as non-analogous characteristics of two concepts related to a given topic.

Topic: _____

Concept 1: _____

Concept 2: _____

How are they alike?

How are they different?

[Click HERE](#) for a list of graphic organizer resources on the SSJCSS website.

How do you find the slope of a line given two points on the line?

Given: A line that passes through (3,-6) and (1, 8)

Step 1

Label the coordinates as (x_1, y_1) and (x_2, y_2) .

Step 1

(x_1, y_1) (x_2, y_2)
(3, -6) (1, 8)

Step 2

Substitute the coordinates into the slope formula:

$$m = \frac{y_2 - y_1}{x_2 - x_1}$$

Step 2

$$m = \frac{8 - (-6)}{1 - 3}$$

Step 3

Simplify the expression.

Step 3

$$m = \frac{8 - (-6)}{1 - 3} = \frac{14}{-2} = -7$$

The slope is -7.

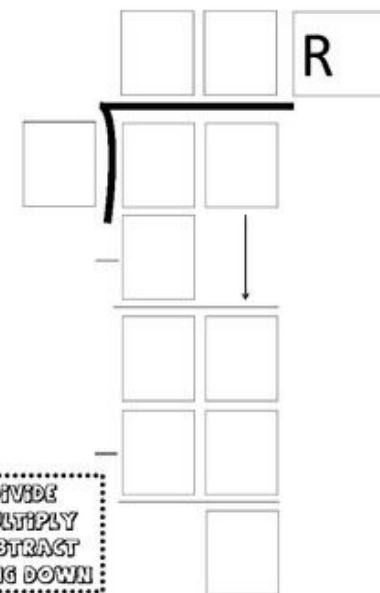
Graphic Organizer by Dale Graham and Linda Meyer
Thomas County Central High School, Thomasville GA

Example:

Step 1

Step 2

Step 3



Does
(Divide)

McDonald's
(Multiply)

Serve
(Subtract)

Cheese
(Compare)

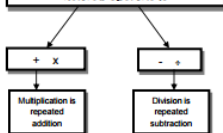
Burgers
(Bring Down)



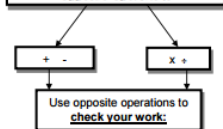
DIVIDE
MULTIPLY
SUBTRACT
BRING DOWN

OPERATIONS

Related Operations



Opposite Operations



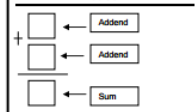
If you are:	Use this to check:
+	+
+	x
+	Go back and re-add
x	Go back and re-multiply

There are 4 math operations:

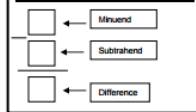
+ - x ÷

Addition
Subtraction
Multiplication
Division

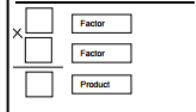
Addition



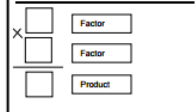
Subtraction



Division



Multiplication



[Click HERE](#) for a list of graphic organizer resources on the SSJCSS website.

Divide:

$$\begin{array}{r} 2 \\ 3 \overline{)75} \\ \underline{6} \\ 15 \end{array}$$

3 goes into 7 2 times... with some extra!

Multiply:

$$\begin{array}{r} 2 \\ 3 \overline{)75} \\ \underline{6} \\ 15 \end{array}$$

2 x 3 = 6

Subtract:

$$\begin{array}{r} 2 \\ 3 \overline{)75} \\ \underline{6} \\ 15 \end{array}$$

Bring Down:

$$\begin{array}{r} 2 \\ 3 \overline{)75} \\ \underline{6} \\ 15 \end{array}$$

Repeat:

$$\begin{array}{r} 25 \\ 3 \overline{)75} \\ \underline{6} \\ 15 \\ \underline{15} \\ 0 \end{array}$$

15 ÷ 3 = 5
5 x 3 = 15

Intervention Options

Prime/pre-teach lessons or activities: (antecedent based intervention)

- Provide an outline of the lesson prior to class
- Provide an example of the finished product for assignments or tasks (visual support)
- Pre-teach new or difficult vocabulary that may intimidate or confuse the student (Online options include: Quizlet, Vocabulary.com)

Chapter 1: consuming (p.1), drone (p.2), shattering (p.2), seeping (p.3), lurched (p.6), wincing (p.7), grimacing (p.10)



Common Core RL.1 (grades of text & references)

The illustrations in the chart below are clues to some of the problems that Brian faced in Chapters 7-8. Fill in the chart to explain the problem. Beside each problem, write how Brian reacted to the situation or solved the problem.

	Problem _____ Solution _____
	Problem _____ Solution _____
	Problem _____ Solution _____

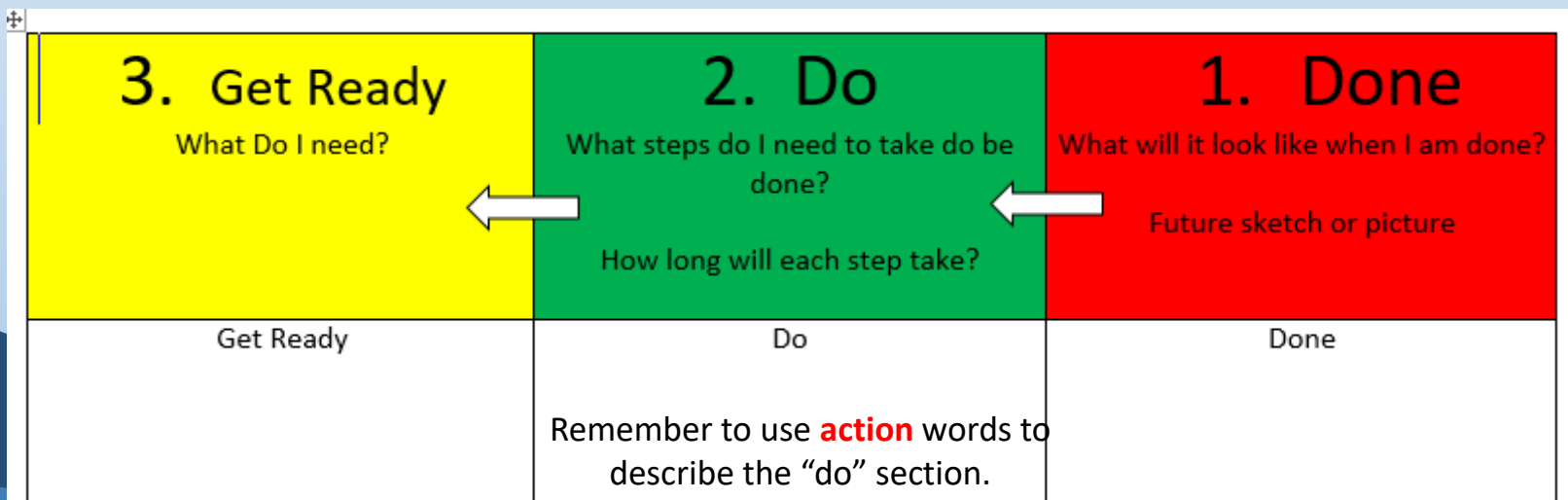
Page 132 Unit Created by Gay Miller

Language of Math	
+	and more than sum of () combine increased by "to the right"
-	less less than difference of () "how many more?" "how much greater?" opposite change space between decreased by "to the left"
X	multiplied by times of product of each
÷	divided by out of share quotient of over
=	IS IS equal to was totals will be costs
<	IS less than ← ○
>	IS greater than IS more than → ○
≤	IS less than or equal to IS at most ← ●
≥	IS greater than or equal to IS at least → ●
$\frac{a}{b}$	IS no less than
	a out of b a divided by b (a ÷ b) a out of every b a for every b a over b "what percentage?"

Intervention Options

Get Ready , Do, Done Model

- Provide a sample of the final product (antecedent based intervention & visual support)
- Create the list of things to “DO”
- Create the list of materials needed
- For self-regulation pair with clock when working
- Set mid-point check in and final completion time
- Reinforce for on track work/behavior (preferable visually)

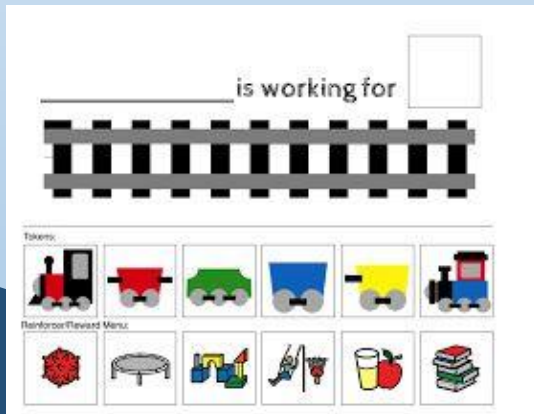


Intervention Options

Provide student with organizational support so that time is not lost due to missing items or distraction by organizing materials. Teach, coach and practice taught organizational skills ([See Executive Functioning Skills: Organization handout](#))

Establish a reinforcement system based on areas of interest and set goals to earn that time

- This can address the student's obsession or focused interest on specific topics
- Increases motivation if reinforcement is based on student interest
- Premack Principle – First/Then





Level 3 Rewards 13+ tokens

Level 2 Rewards 9-13 tokens

Level 1 Rewards 5-8 tokens

When I earn 9 days of level 3 rewards I can earn . . .

Four empty boxes are arranged horizontally, followed by an equals sign and another empty box. Below this, there are two rows of five boxes each, each containing the number 3.

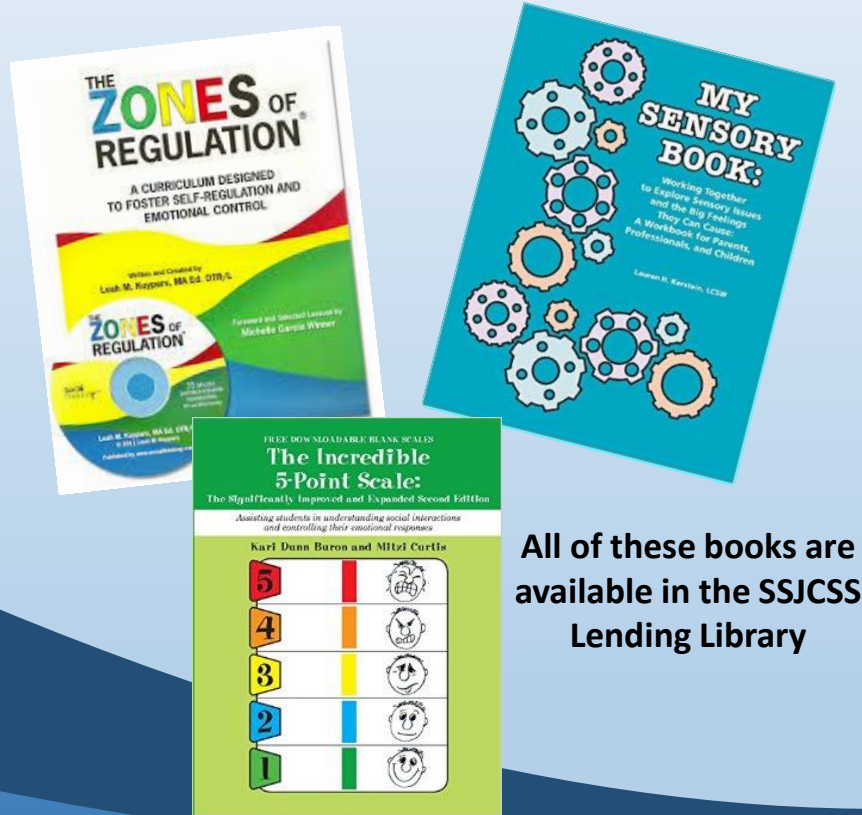


Teach self-regulation for students to either calm down/relax or wake up to help with focus and sustained attention

- Incredible 5 Point Scale
- Zones of Regulation
- My Sensory Book - identifies how their “engine runs”

Consult with OT for specific sensory strategies to meet students’ individual needs ([antecedent based intervention](#))

- Proprioceptive calming strategies
- Vestibular altering strategies



- **Vestibular** — alerting, wake up
- Swinging
- Toe Touches
- Help teacher move mats, carry boxes or other furniture
- Climbing up and down on playground equipment
- Swinging
- Animals Walks
- Bending over to pick up items from the floor
- Dizzy disc for spinning
- Teach him to do somersaults
- Spin on a scooter

- **Proprioceptive** — Calming
- weighted or compression items,
- jump on a trampoline,
- push, pull or carry something heavy,
- roll up in a blanket like a burrito, body sock,
- push play-doh to make pancakes,
- wall, floor, desk pushups,
- crab walk or crawl with scooter,
- toss a weighted ball,
- weighted back pack to and from set location,
- and/or crunchy or chewy snacks.

Intervention Options

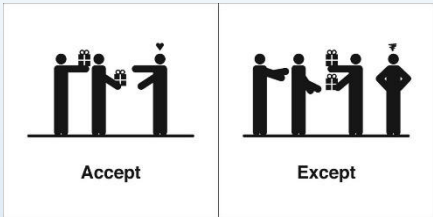
Teach social scripts for self-advocacy (Don't just create one and give it to the student)

- I need more time . . .
- Can you come back to me . . .
- Could you say that again please . . .
- Can you give me a clue/hint . . .
- I don't understand the question . . .
- Please show me an example . . .
- I apologize, I was not listening for the instructions . . .

Intervention Options

Model, teach, coach and REINFORCE think aloud procedural steps

- Use mnemonic devices
- Use motor movement or motions
- Positive self-talk



Values of Roman numerals (in value order): I Value Xylophones Like Cows Dig Milk, which stands for I=1, V=5, X=10, L= 50, C=100, D=500, M=1,000.

Kings	Play	Chess	On	Fine	Glass	Sets
K I N G D O M	P H Y L U M	C L A S S	O R D E R	F A M I L Y	G E N U S	S P E C I E S

Lines

Spaces

"Every Good Burger Drips Fat" (on yer) "FACE"









"Grizzly Bears Don't Fly Aloft, And Cows Emit Gas"

Mnemonic		
Please	P	- Parenthesis
Excuse	E	- Exponent
My	M	- Multiplication
Dear	D	- Division
Aunt	A	- Addition
Sally	S	- Subtraction

Links to Resources

- [Free File folders to use as structured activities](#)
- [Elementary Reinforcement form](#)
- [Secondary Reinforcement Form](#)
- [Tons of free behavior charts and token systems](#)
- [SSJCSS Website links for reinforcement](#)
- [Misunderstood Minds – students with attention difficulties](#)
- [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 – Breaking Down assignments](#)
- [PBIS World – Reinforcement/Reward Systems](#)
- [PBIS World – Data tracking resources](#)
- [Forced Choice Reinforcement Survey](#)
- [GoNoodle.com – encourages movement and exercise to assist attention and focus](#)
- [JAM \(Just a Minute\) – one minute exercises](#)

There's an App for That!

-  [Story Creator \(\\$1.99\)](#) – social narratives/scripts
-  [Shadow Puppet – \(Free\)](#) – Create quick social narratives/scripts
-  [R+Remind – \(\\$0.99\)](#) – Reinforcement
-  [This for That \(free\)](#) – visual schedules
-  [Dance Party Zoo \(\\$2.99\)](#) – app that gets kids moving and imitating movement of others
-  [Wake N Shake \(\\$0.99\)](#) – this app is an alarm that you have you shake the device for it to turn off.
-  [Lumosity \(free – upgrades with subscriptions\)](#) – touted as a brain training app with data collection to show individual progress.
-  [Mindfulness App \(free\)](#) – guided meditation to help with calming and relaxation

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.*