

Tips for Caregivers and Parents on Schooling at Home:
What Role Do Executive Skills Play?

Our kids are at home, with the expectation that they will continue to learn while schools are closed due to the coronavirus pandemic. If this causes chest pains, shortness of breath, or full-blown panic as you figure out how to navigate your kids' schooling while you're doing all the other things you have to do to keep your lives stitched together during this challenging time, you are not alone.

First, some words of reassurance:

- This is uncharted waters for everyone—teachers, parents, and kids, alike, and it will take time for us all to adjust to “the new normal.” There’s no prescribed framework or template to work from because we’ve never been here before. It’s a work-in-progress for all of us, and none of us will get it perfect in the first pass. So, cut yourself some slack, use some positive self-talk (“We *will* survive,” “Perfect is not the goal here”), and as you fall into bed at night, pat yourself on the back for getting through the day.
- Your job is to be a parent, not a teacher. If you provide a place for your children to work and some structure to help them spend some time productively, then you are doing your job.
- Even if you are able to give kids the place and structure they need to get work done, it will take a few days for kids to adjust to a new way of schooling. At the end of the day, if you can, take a few minutes to debrief with your kid. What worked well today? What didn’t work? What should we do differently tomorrow?
- Keep in mind that stress shortens fuses, increases irritability, and undermines our ability to access skills and strengths that under normal circumstances we may have in some abundance. On top of that, kids pick up on the stress level of the adults around them even when those adults are trying to hide that stress. If everyone in your house seems to be “out of sorts,” this is a normal response to an abnormal situation.
- Some things are more important than school. If you feel like things are coming apart at the seams, give yourself permission to let some things slide. If you have in your head an image of the “perfect parent” and you don’t fit that description (and NO ONE DOES), then set it aside. Doing what you can to keep your family intact is way more important than making sure your kids fit in their 120 minutes of daily lessons (or whatever your child’s school is recommending).

Secondly, some words of advice. Rather than reinvent the wheel, we found some pointers from a home-schooling mom written to provide some useful guidance. Here’s the link:

<https://www.parentingnh.com/thoughts-on-learning-at-home-from-a-homeschool-mom/>

Thirdly, if you’re not familiar with the term “executive skills,” now is a good time to understand what these skills are and how they impact learning and productivity. Here’s what they are: Executive skills

refer to the cognitive processes required to plan, organize, and execute activities. A concise description of what executive skills are: they are the skills that make goal-directed behavior possible. Here's another short description: they are the skills required to *execute tasks*. Or, as translated by an elementary school teacher to match the language of the second graders she taught, these are the skills you need *to get things done*.

Executive skills are frontal lobe functions that begin to emerge shortly after birth but take 25 years or longer to fully mature. It's helpful to think about them in two groups: Foundational Skills that develop earlier and more Advanced Skills, that develop later (and that often incorporate the earlier developing Foundational Skills).

Foundational Executive Skills	Advanced Executive Skills
• Response Inhibition or Impulse Control	• Organization
• Working memory	• Planning/prioritization
• Emotional Control	• Time management
• Flexibility	• Goal-directed persistence
• Sustained Attention	• Metacognition (problem-solving, self-monitoring, self-evaluation)
• Task Initiation	

Appendix 1 at the end of this handout provides definitions of each skill. But let's connect these skills to school. Teachers provide structure and support, which makes it easier for children with immature executive skills to function successfully in the classroom. They give kids a schedule and provide lessons and activities that give children the structure to help them learn to initiate tasks and sustain attention. They alternate between desk-work and activity-based learning, they give kids the chance to collaborate with peers and problem solve at a developmentally appropriate level. When young kids aren't ready to use skills independently (such as all the advanced skills listed above), teachers do the planning and prioritizing for kids, they monitor and help them manage time, and they give them organizational structures, such as building in time to help them clean out their desks or instructing them on how to keep notebooks or planners.

No parent provides the amount of structure that the typical teacher does—in part because no parent is trying to manage 20-30 kids at the same time! So when schooling suddenly starts taking place at home rather than at school, parents are understandably unprepared to provide the kind of support that children with just-developing executive skills need. The good news is that with a few small steps, parents can do a lot to help kids practice these skills—skills that will serve them well once they return to school and go back to the lives they used to know.

Building from the sage advice of the home-schooling mom in the blogpost referenced above, here's our advice to parents. These are strategies that will help make the days at home more manageable,

but more than that, they are strategies that will help children exercise and practice a set of skills that are not only critical to school success, but that help adults manage their jobs, their homes and their relationships.

Supporting Executive Skills in Children of All Ages

- Put in place daily routines. This should include at a minimum 1) what time kids are expected to get up in the morning; 2) what time the work of the day will begin; and 3) some expectation about how much time will be spent on schoolwork or how much work will be done over the course of the day. This will differ for kids of different ages. We know that the sleep patterns of teens shift and that school start times are often not well-suited to the teen’s biology and circadian rhythms. So for teens, it may make sense to start the day later than for younger children, who tend to be more alert early in the morning.
- Schedule frequent work breaks. With elementary aged children, lessons or activities should take no more than 15-20 minutes, with a 10-minute break between activities. While this can be seen as a general recommendation for children and pre-teens, your child may need an adjustment—especially if your child has any kind of learning or attention problem, since for these kids, learning requires more effort and energy.

Building variety into the breaks helps. Some might involve movement. For instance, www.gonoodle.com provides short, fun videos featuring different kinds of exercises that are appealing to elementary aged children. Others might involve educational games. Writing fun activities on slips of paper and having children draw one at random introduces an element of surprise that children like. Many schools provide parents with an abundance of on-line resources they can draw on, not only for lessons but also for “down-time” activities. Appendix 2 provides links to a number of these resources.

Although middle and high school students often sit in classes that last anywhere from 45-90 minutes, parents should not expect them to engage that long in school work. Even at those grade levels, teachers typically don’t spend more than 25 minutes on a single task before switching to something else. And the classroom offers more opportunity for collaboration and social engagement than home schooling does. If your child’s middle or high school is not offering on-line classes in real time, then parents can ask kids of that age to create a realistic schedule for how they will spend their time.

- Create a daily schedule for kids to follow—or, with older students—ask them to create a schedule (with guidelines or parameters). Parents and kids respond to varying levels of

structure when it comes to schedules, so in Appendix 3, we've created a graduated series of schedules that offer varying degrees of specificity. Look at these and select the level that you're most comfortable with.

While having a schedule provides a skeleton that gives the day shape and substance, don't overdo it. Because teachers are managing large groups of children and have a set curriculum they need to cover, they sometimes have to interrupt good work. If you find your child is engaged in something meaningful, educational, productive, or creative, let her have the satisfaction of seeing through to completion something that's important to her. Just reconfigure the rest of the day or change tomorrow's schedule. If you find your child avoiding some tasks in favor of others, talk with her about "first work, then play"—or switching off between non-preferred and preferred tasks.

- Use the opportunity to find non-school ways to support executive skills. This might mean working on planning by having kids plan how they will spend their time once the school work for the day is behind them, or working on organization by having kids design and maintain their workspace. They can work on time management by learning to estimate how long it takes to complete tasks and perhaps keeping a log. www.toggl.com offers a free on-line timer where students can log the task or activity they're working on, start the timer when they begin the activity and turn it off when they're done. The website maintains the log, so they can track how much time they're spending on a variety of tasks.

Finally, you may want to identify your child's executive skill strengths and weaknesses and help them think about ways they can use their strengths more effectively or strategies they can use to build their weaker skills. Informal surveys for doing this can be found in books by Dawson & Guare (e.g., *Smart but Scattered*), but parents may be able to do this simply by reading through the definitions in Appendix 1 and deciding which ones represent strengths for their kids and which ones might be challenges (keeping in mind, of course, that none of these skills are fully operational until age 25 or later).

In Appendix 4, we've given you some suggestions for ways you can use the home-schooling experience to help kids practice executive skills. We recommend selecting one skill and 1-2 activities to focus on to start with. For children at the elementary level, we generally recommend that parents select one of the first six foundational skills to focus on. At the middle/high school levels, the advanced skills may be reasonable targets. However, if your child has significant executive skill challenges, especially if they are receiving special education services or are struggling with poor grades in school due to weak executive skills, we generally recommend focusing on the foundational skills even if the child is a teenager.

These suggestions were compiled by Peg Dawson with contributions from:

- *Rebecca Bagatz, Liz Casey, Cheryl Clark, Bethany Fleming, Peggy Howard-Solari, Erin Preston, Lori Jabar, Rachael Ramsey, Kate Salvati, Katie Scheffer, Mary Ellen Spain, Felicia Sperry—all members of the Study Group on Executive Skills sponsored by the New Hampshire Association of School Psychologists.*
- *Marisa Marraccini and Meagan Padro, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill*

Appendix 1
Executive Skill Definitions

Executive Skill	Definition	Description
Response Inhibition	The capacity to think before you act – this is the ability to resist the urge to say or do something allows us the time to evaluate a situation and how our behavior might impact it.	In the young child, waiting for a short period without being disruptive is an example of response inhibition while in the adolescent it would be demonstrated by accepting a referee’s call without an argument.
Working Memory	The ability to hold information in memory while performing complex tasks. It incorporates the ability to draw on past learning or experience to apply to the situation at hand or to project into the future.	A young child, for example can hold in mind and follow 1-2 step directions while the middle school child can remember the expectations of multiple teachers.
Emotional Control	The ability to manage emotions in order to achieve goals, complete tasks, or control and direct behavior	A young child with this skill is able to recover from a disappointment in a short time. A teenager is able to manage the anxiety of a game or test and still perform.
Flexibility	The ability to revise plans in the face of obstacles, setbacks, new information or mistakes. It relates to an adaptability to changing conditions.	A young child can adjust to a change in plans without major distress. A high school student can accept an alternative such as a different job when the first choice is not available.
Sustained Attention	The capacity to maintain attention to a situation or task in spite of distractibility, fatigue, or boredom.	Completing a 5-minute chore with occasional supervision is an example of sustained attention in the younger child. The teenager is able to attend to homework, with short breaks, for one to two hours.
Task Initiation	The ability to begin projects without undue procrastination, in an efficient or timely fashion.	A young child is able to start a chore or assignment right after instructions are given. A high school student does not wait until the last minute to begin a project.
Planning/Prioritizing	The ability to create a roadmap to reach a goal or to complete a task. It also involves being able to make decisions about what’s important to focus on and what’s not important.	A young child, with coaching, can think of options to settle a peer conflict. A teenager can formulate a plan to get a job.
Organization	The ability to create and maintain systems to keep track of information or materials.	A young child can, with a reminder, put toys in a designated place. An adolescent can organize and locate sports equipment.
Time Management	The capacity to estimate how much time one has, how to allocate it, and how to stay within time limits and deadlines. It also involves a sense that time is important.	A young child can complete a short job within a time limit set by an adult. A high school student can establish a schedule to meet task deadlines.

Executive Skill	Definition	Description
Goal-Directed Persistence	The capacity to have a goal, follow through to the completion of the goal, and not be put off by or distracted by competing interests.	A first grader can complete a job in order to get to recess. A teenager can earn and save money over time to buy something of importance.
Metacognition	The ability to stand back and take a birds-eye view of oneself in a situation. It is an ability to observe how you problem solve. It also includes self-monitoring and self-evaluative skills (e.g., asking yourself, "How am I doing? or How did I do?").	A young child can change behavior in response to feedback from an adult. A teenager can monitor and critique her performance and improve it by observing others who are more skilled.

Appendix 2 Resources for Parents to Support Schooling at Home

<https://sites.google.com/dpi.nc.gov/remote-learning-resources/home>

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1t3r618pd8MAi6V87dG2D66PtiKoHdHusBpjPKXgm36w/htmlview?fbclid=IwAR0rRGIWcZ8gIJB90jY7IipVNzJL7zEv6XkxZ7ZugHvRNxjSDL6x5hQ-gI&sle=true#gid=0>

<https://ed.unc.edu/2020/03/15/schooling-at-home-resources-for-parents-and-students/>

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/1vmfxjq5e971a0o/Helpful%20Resources%20for%20Students%20and%20Families.docx?dl=0>

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lessons-and-ideas/>

<https://www.jesselewischooselove.org> This website is great for all age groups. They currently are running daily classes with great activities for younger children. This is a free social emotional learning program k-12 that ties in well with EF skills: Self-awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship skills and Decision making.

Another suggestion: build in longer breaks to allow for physical movement and creativity. 45 minutes recesses twice a day and alternating art/music/language throughout the week may help keep your child engaged. There are also a lot of artists, dance studios, etc., providing free online sessions for kids right now (lunch doodles with Mo Willems): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RmzjCPQv3y8>, “How to Draw a Cat” with E.B. Goodale (<http://www.ebgoodale.com/videos>, young acro class (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QW5wv3aNDI>

Appendix 3
Sample Daily Schedules

NOTE: We have organized these based on degree of specificity. Some parents are grateful for detail and others are overwhelmed by it. Please look at the options below and see what fits your needs best.

OPTION 1

Task	Order (what will you do 1 st , 2 nd , etc.)	How much time will it take?	Done √

OPTION 2

STUDY PLAN

Date: _____

Task	How long will it take?	When will you start?	Where will you work?	Actual start/stop times		Done (√)

OPTION 3

Kids' Schedule – Week of March 16th

6:00-8:00 am	Get up and get ready	Eat breakfast, get dressed, brush teeth/hair We'll *TRY*: Pick one 30-min show each on TV If extra time: free play time
8:00-8:30 am	Violin	Each practice with mommy or daddy
8:30-9:00 am	Morning walk	Family walk with dog If raining: Family yoga
9:00-11:00 am	Academic time + snack	Use a timer: 4 learning blocks of 20-min each, with 10-min brain breaks in between Use the schedule you got – check each thing off when done
11:00-11:45	Specials	A different type of creative activity each day: Art, Legos, projects, writing, cooking, etc.
11:45-12:15	Lunch	Make and eat lunch
12:15-1:00	Recess	Play outside (if raining: XXXXXXXXXXXXX)
1:00-3:00	Academic time	Use a timer: 4 learning blocks of 20-min each, with 10-min brain breaks in between Use the schedule you got – check each thing off when done
3:00-4:00	Quiet time + snack	Reading, puzzles, Legos, art, quiet projects
4:00-5:00	Afternoon Recess	Gardening, yard work - <i>Week 1 Goal: Get the garden ready and planted for spring</i> Yard sports
5:00-6:00	Dinner	Help make dinner
6:00-7:30	Free time	TV/Switch/family board games
7:30-8:00	Get ready for bed	

OPTION 4

WEEK 1 – 1st grade

Use a **timer** for each block (20 and 10 minutes)

	TIME	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
1	9:00-9:20	Reading: Picture	Reading: Picture	Reading: Chapter	Reading: Picture	Reading : Chapter
	9:20-9:30	BRAIN BREAK				
2	9:30-9:50	Reading Log	Reading Log	Reading Log	Reading Log	Reading Log
	9:50-10:00	BRAIN BREAK				
3	10:00-10:20	Math worksheet	Math game	Math worksheet	Math game	Math worksheet
	10:20-10:30	BRAIN BREAK				
4	10:30-10:50	Phonics worksheet	Phonics game	Phonics worksheet	Phonics game	Phonics worksheet
	10:50-11:00	BRAIN BREAK				
	11:00-11:45	MUSIC	PE	SPANISH	MEDIA	ART
	11:45-12:15	Lunch				
	12:15-1:00	Recess				
	1:00-1:30	Learning aps on iPad (put younger child to nap)				
5	1:30-1:50	Mixed Media Project: Brainstorm	Mixed Media Project: Design	Mixed Media Project: Design	Mixed Media Project: Model	Mixed Media Project: Model
	1:50-2:00	BRAIN BREAK				
6	2:00-2:20	Readworks	Readworks	Readworks	Readworks	Readworks
	2:20-2:30	BRAIN BREAK				
7	2:30-2:50	Writing (opinion): Which insect do you like better? Why?	Writing (opinion): The best season is...	Writing (opinion): The best fruit to eat is a...	Writing (opinion): The best outdoor activity is..	Writing (opinion): What would you like to take to the pool?
	2:50-3:00	BRAIN BREAK				

8	3:00-3:20	Catch-up time: What didn't you finish? <i>[If all done: Congrats! You can choose a learning game]</i>	Catch-up time: What didn't you finish? <i>[If all done: Congrats! You can choose a learning game]</i>	Catch-up time: What didn't you finish? <i>[If all done: Congrats! You can choose a learning game]</i>	Catch-up time: What didn't you finish? <i>[If all done: Congrats! You can choose a learning game]</i>	Catch-up time: What didn't you finish? <i>[If all done: Congrats! You can choose a learning game]</i>
	3:20-4:00	FREE PLAY				

WEEK 1 – preschool

	Time	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
1	9:00-9:20	Story/Play	Story/Play	Story/Play	Story/Play	Story/Play
	9:20-9:30	BRAIN BREAK				
2	9:30-9:50	Writing/Drawing	Writing/Drawing	Writing/Drawing	Writing/Drawing	Writing/Drawing
	9:50-10:00	BRAIN BREAK				
3	10:00-10:20	Sensory/Counting	Sensory/Counting	Sensory/Counting	Sensory/Counting	Sensory/Counting
	10:20-10:30	BRAIN BREAK				
4	10:30-10:50	Free/Pretend Play	Free/Pretend Play	Free/Pretend Play	Free/Pretend Play	Free/Pretend Play
	10:50-11:00	BRAIN BREAK				
	11:00-11:45	MUSIC	PE	SPANISH	MEDIA	ART
	11:45-12:15	Lunch				
	12:15-1:00	Recess				
	1:00-1:30	Put down for a nap (older child plays learning aps on iPad)				
5	1:30-1:50					
	1:50-2:00					
6	2:00-2:20					
	2:20-2:30	Zzzzzzz				
7	2:30-2:50					
	2:50-3:00					
8	3:00-3:20					
	3:20-4:00	FREE PLAY				

OPTION 5
VISUAL SCHEDULES

<https://specialneedsresourceblog.com/2018/09/25/visual-schedule-resources/>

This website has great resources! It has links to learn about different types of visual schedules, how to pick out the right type and specificity level based on the needs of the child, guides on how to implement the schedules purposefully and effectively, templates and free pre-made schedules, free printables, craft ideas for physically making the schedules (velcro, pinned to a string, etc.):

Appendix 4

Ways to Use Schooling at Home to Help Students Practice and Strengthen Executive Skills

Executive Skill	Ideas for Using Schooling at Home to Help Children Develop These Skills
Response Inhibition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We recommend teaching response inhibition by teaching children to “wait” and “stop.” Build in “wait time” during the day, and alternating between work and play or preferred and non-preferred activities can help build this skill. Games like “Simon Says” and “Red Light Green Light,” for younger children, are fun ways to practice response inhibition.
Working Memory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use flash cards (or electronic versions such as iFlash for Macs) to practice math facts, spelling words or sight words. If working memory is particularly weak, don’t go overboard with this, but you may want to try a format such as “incremental rehearsal.” Here’s a YouTube video that explains this approach: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vUeNVlf7p-8 • Encourage kids with weak working memory to come up with “work-arounds” to help them remember important things—checklists and post-it reminders are common examples. With older kids, prompt them to think about how they can use their smart phones to help them remember (reminders, alarms, taking pictures, etc.).
Emotional Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help kids identify the “triggers” (what sets them off) and help them find replacement behaviors (e.g., leave the room when they realize a sibling is pushing their buttons). Praise/reinforce the child for using the replacement behavior. • For kids with significant problems with emotional control, be prepared for the upsets to be more frequent or more severe in the early days of adjusting to being at home instead of at school. With these kids, easing into a home school schedule and not expecting too much too fast, may be important.
Flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kids who are inflexible tend to do better with structure and routine and they handle closed-ended tasks (i.e., 1 right answer) better than open-ended tasks. Flexibility can be “stretched” by giving kids assignments that involve creativity, but if this is hard for your child, you do the task for them and model your thought process as you do it. Games like “Apples to Apples” encourage flexible thinking. • You can also encourage flexibility by having kids think about ways to mix it up with their daily schedule so that they’re not doing the same thing every day at the same time.

Sustained Attention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask kids to decide how long they can go on a work task before they need a break. Keep track of the time and see if they can stretch their work sessions after a while. • Ask kids to become aware of when they start "drifting" when they're working, which may be a signal that they need to take a break. Keep the breaks relatively short and, when possible, build movement or exercise into the breaks.
Task Initiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have kids identify start times for tasks and help them stick to the agreed upon schedule. If this is particularly hard, keep the tasks short and easy, with the understanding that the real goal is to practice the skill of task initiation.
Planning/Prioritizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model planning for younger children so they hear what planning sounds like. With older kids, encourage them to make their own plans for the day and to run them by you for discussion or negotiation. Help kids identify fun activities (when the school work is over for the day) that require planning and help them think through the steps in the plan. • Post the schedule for the day in a prominent place so that everyone can refer to it throughout the day (see Appendix 3 for sample schedules)
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give kids leeway in designing their own workspace. You could call it a "home office," and talk about what office supplies are needed. When the space is organized, take a picture of it, and take 5-10 minutes at the end of the "school day" to make sure the space is tidy and ready for the next day.
Time Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When kids are making plans for the day, have them estimate how long they think work tasks will take. • As with Planning/Prioritizing, time management is facilitated by following a daily schedule, so post the schedule in a prominent place for easy reference. • Ask kids to think about how they want to use their down time. Parents should encourage their children to engage in a variety of leisure activities --movement, outdoors, educational games, computer games, reading for pleasure, television viewing, social engagement (e.g., through Face Time or online games that include communication options). •
Goal-Directed Persistence and Metacognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have kids set daily goals and have them reflect at the end of the day how the day went. See the "Exit Ticket" example below. • Help kids use self-monitoring strategies to encourage self-awareness and to improve executive skills in general (see resources below).

EXIT TICKET

DATE:

What is my goal for the day?

How much of my plan did I accomplish?

0 None	1 Less than 25%	2 26-50%	3 51-75%	4 76-99%	5 All of it!
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What worked well today?

What didn't work so well?

What will I try tomorrow?

Additional Resources for Executive Skills

Books

Dawson, P. & Guare, R. (2009). *Smart but Scattered: The revolutionary “executive skills approach to helping kids reach their potential*. New York: Guilford Press.

Delman, M. (2018). *Your Kid’s Gonna Be Okay*. Boston: Beyond Book Smart.

Guare, R., Dawson, P., & Guare, C. (2013). *Smart but scattered teens: The revolutionary “executive skills” approach to helping teens reach their potential*. New York: Guilford Press.

Kenworthy, L., Anthony, L.G., Alexander, K. C., Werner, M. A., Cannon, L., & Greenman, L. (2014). *Solving executive function challenges*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Web Resources

www.smartbutscatteredkids.com This website has a number of resources (e.g., a *Homework Survival Guide* and videos for parents) that provide more information about executive skills and how to help kids strengthen their skills.

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvePPJz4o_6Dg5qTzOqcVPg This is a YouTube channel called Teen Changers developed by Rachael Ramsey that introduces kids to executive skills through a huge array of short, entertaining videos. Although aimed at middle school kids, they may also be appealing to younger and older kids.

<https://learningworksforkids.com/executive-functions/> This website offers a wide variety of resources connected to executive skills, including suggestions for video games that kids employ executive skills when playing.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/br9tvqloucjlxy/Elementary%20level%20executive%20skill%20resources.pdf?dl=0> This is a link to a document that includes books, games, and video links geared toward lower elementary aged students to introduce executive skills using fun activities.

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu> This website is devoted to executive skills, particularly focusing on at-risk populations, such as children living in poverty or environments characterized by “toxic stress.” It offers helpful videos as well as pdf documents with suggestions for parents with children of different ages.

Links to Self-Monitoring Checklists

<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Students-Daily-Behavior-Chart-372520>

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/blog-posts/genia-connell/behavior-contracts-and-checklists-work/>

<https://goalbookapp.com/toolkit/v/strategy/self-monitoring##preview-b3ebd9c4-7709-4f55-47cd-9449002077e0-1>

<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Self-Monitoring-Checklists-for-Independent-Classwork-Homework-4209733>

<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Self-Assessments-and-Checklists-for-Good-Work-Habits-4501962>

For additional ideas for self-monitoring and for executive skills, check out Pinterest and type those terms into the site's search engine.



Peg Dawson, ED.D., NCSP
In over 40 years of clinical practice, Dr. Peg Dawson

has worked with thousands of children who struggle at home and in school. At the center of their struggles are often weak executive skills. Along with her colleague, Dr. Richard Guare, she has written numerous books on this topic for educators, mental health professionals, and parents, among them *Smart but Scattered*, *Smart but Scattered Teens*, *Executive Skills in Children and Adolescents*, and *Coaching Students with Executive Skills Deficits*. Peg is also a past president of the National Association of School Psychologists, and the International School Psychology Association, and is a recipient of NASP's Lifetime Achievement Award.



Co-Author
Smart But Scattered

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SMART BUT SCATTERED: Strengthening Executive Skills in Children & Adolescents

PEG DAWSON, ED.D., NCSP

Executive skills are sometimes called “the hidden curriculum.” They are skills such as task initiation, sustained attention, working memory, planning, organization, and goal-directed persistence that are absolutely critical to school success, yet curriculum standards seldom if ever explicitly reference these skills. Neuroscientists now tell us that these skills take a minimum of 25 years to reach full maturation, and the course of that development is influenced by experience and exposure, by modeling, practice, and direct instruction. This workshop will provide participants with a framework for understanding these key skills, how they develop in diverse populations, and how to support executive skills by embedding them into classroom routines and lessons and by tailoring interventions to meet the needs of individual students and classrooms.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To describe the brain processes involved in executive skill development both in typically developing children and those with executive dysfunction (such as ADHD).
- To identify how executive skills impact school performance and daily living.
- “Best practices” in assessing executive skills, including both formal and informal measures.
- To design interventions for improving executive skills in students, including
 1. How to make environmental modifications to support weak executive skills.
 2. How to develop protocols for teaching executive skills by embedding them in daily routines and classroom lessons.
 3. How to design student-centered interventions targeted to specific problem situations and executive skill challenges.
- The critical features of a coaching method geared to improving school performance through supporting executive skill development.

AGENDA & KEY TOPICS

Overview of Executive Skills

- Definitions
- Underlying Theory

Executive Skill Development Across the Lifespan

- Normal executive skill development from infancy through adulthood
- Negative influences on executive skill development (birth issues, head injuries, and disorders such as ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder)

Assessment of Executive Skills

- Parent/Teacher/Student Interviews
- Behaviour Rating Scales

Modifying the Environment to Support Students with Weak Executive Skills

- Changing the Physical or Social Environment
- Modifying Tasks
- Changing the Way Adults Interact with Students

WHO SHOULD ATTEND

Education and Clinical Professionals: K-12 Classroom Teachers, School Counsellors/Psychologists, Learning Assistance/ Resource Teachers, School Administrators, School Paraprofessionals including Special Education Assistants, Classroom Assistants and Childcare Workers. All other professionals who support students including but not limited to: Nurses, Social Workers, Psychologists, Clinical Counsellors, Family Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Speech Language Pathologists, Addiction Counsellors, Youth Workers, Mental Health Workers, Probation Officers, and Early Childhood Educators.

Parents, Caregiver, Foster Parents, Grandparents, and Extended Family raising a child.



Steven T. Olivas, Ph.D., HSP, is a Licensed Psychologist in Private Practice in Middle Tennessee.

He began his practice career in 1991 when ADHD was exploding onto the scene, and has enjoyed working with the energy and spontaneous creativity of children ever since. Throughout his career, he has taught courses at nine colleges and universities, been a national public speaker, a regular columnist for a local newspaper, and co-host of a popular radio show. He is also the author of the acclaimed book, *Bad Kids... or Bad Behaviour?* For nearly twenty years, he has been helping parents, clinicians, and school systems.



Author

When Good Kids Go Bad

6 HOURS | 6 CEUs

This **On Demand** course and will be available immediately after purchase. Participants can watch, pause, and re-watch the sessions at their convenience.

All course content (quiz, certificate, videos) will be available until April 1, 2021.

Extensions cannot be granted under any circumstances.

Registration will close on March 1, 2021.

REGISTRATION FEE

Individual **\$249**

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OVER 30 PROVEN & EFFECTIVE BRIEF INTERVENTIONS FOR CHILDREN & ADOLESCENTS WITH EMOTIONAL & BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS

STEVEN OLIVAS, PH.D., HSP

Over 30 Proven and Effective Brief Interventions for Children and Adolescents with Emotional and Behavioural Problems will guide you through focused, clear and proven approaches to working with children and youth. Every professional who seeks to fill their toolbox with tested methods will leave this seminar with a wealth of fresh ideas and rejuvenated spirits. With nearly 30 years of clinical experience and a background in improvisational comedy, Dr. Steve is a strong proponent of "Edu-tainment". He uses wit and humour to enhance your learning experience, improving the retention and utilization of the skills covered. You will leave this workshop with new strategies for success and techniques to revitalize your interactions with students.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Utilize effective techniques for the treatment of behaviour disorders in children
- Develop specific behavioural interventions that address the developmental stage of the child or adolescent
- Consider the efficacy of biologically-based interventions to address behavioural and emotional disorders in children
- Explore clinical manifestations among anxiety disorders, ADHD, mood disorders, ODD, and conduct disorder as they relate to diagnoses
- Develop skills for establishing an interpersonal rapport to overcome resistance to change in children and adolescents
- Analyze the symptoms of behavioural and emotional disorders in children and adolescents and establish how this informs your intervention strategies

AGENDA & KEY TOPICS

Introduction

- Introduce speaker
- Daily agenda
- Defining Terms/Seminar Warm-ups

Problem Solving Decision Tree

Immediate Interventions: Physiological

- Neuropsychology
- Hormones
- Gender/Relationship to School
- Diagnosis/Terminology Primer
- Medication Primer

Tools to Manage Anger

- Identify GOAL of misbehaviour
- Creating Common Language
- Expand Emotional Awareness/Vocabulary
- Standing 8 Count
- Tom McIntyre
- Empathy Building
- Time-In/Restitution

General Mental Health

- Physical Health
- Mental Health
- Privacy/Security

Siphoning Energy/Counterconditioning

- Settle Mind
 - Self-talk
 - Cognitive Reprogramming
 - Mental Imagery/Visualization
- Settle Body
 - Progressive Muscle
 - Parasympathetic Engagement

Rudolf Dreikurs' Model

- Reasons for poor behaviour

- Attention

- Power

- Revenge

- Inadequacy

- Strategies to deal with each/either

Positive Reinforcement/Stabilization

- Home: Listening Jar
- School
 - Token Economies
 - Response Cost

Hendrix Intentional Dialogue

ADHD/ADD

- Noise to the system
- Anticipation
- Games with rules
- Red light/Green light

Autism Spectrum

- Read & React
- Rules of Engagement
- Building a Broader Structure
- Temple Grandin

Jay Haley - Prescribe the Symptom

- Classroom Examples
- Separate Behaviour from application

Passive Aggressive Behaviour

- Definition
- Expressions/Signs
- Strategies for Handling/Responding

Ways Teachers Can Reinforce Negative Behaviour

Handling Aggressive Behaviour By Co-Workers/At Work



Kathy Morris, M.Ed., has been a speech therapist, teacher for self-contained programs

(including students with autism, severe behavioural difficulties, and cerebral palsy), resource teacher and first grade teacher. She was also a diagnostician/supervisor for all grade levels. She was a LIFE Skills/autism/behaviour/assistive technology consultant at a Texas education service center before leaving to start her own business in 1999. Her business, igivuWings, has reached families and educators throughout the world,. Kathy has had over 42 years of experience working with children and adolescents with severe behavioural difficulties.



Outstanding Educator for Children with Disabilities

12 HOURS | 12 CEUs

This On Demand course and will be available April 23, 2020 after purchase. Participants can watch, pause, and re-watch the sessions at their convenience.

- 2 hours per session
- 6 sessions
- Available on-demand April 23, 2020
- Each session will consist of 2 hours of teaching content
- **Non-Interactive** - registrants will have access to lectures, PowerPoint presentation, demonstrations, video clips, and experiential exercises.

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25 PROVEN & EFFECTIVE SELF-REGULATION STRATEGIES & INTERVENTIONS WITH CHILDREN & ADOLESCENTS

KATHY MORRIS, M.ED.

Children and adolescents who struggle with self -regulation often look like those who just aren't paying attention, have difficulty with emotional control, blurting out answers, have difficulty making transitions and/or purposely not controlling themselves. They may be unaware of the connections of their behaviour and the consequences of the behaviour. If you don't have self-regulation, you may act out, get placed in timeout, sent to the principal's office, then miss important learning time. A downward spiral occurs as the student gets more upset and continues to act out when given punitive consequences.

Executive functioning changes radically over the first few years, continues to improve quickly throughout adolescent years and, finally, during early adulthood years, the frontal lobes and prefrontal lobes are activated and connected to other regions of the brain. Executive function skills can be trained. It's just like going to the gym. The more one practices these strategies for metacognition and self-regulation, the neural connections will be strengthened.

The beginnings of executive function and self-regulation skills appear in the neurotypical brain around 4 years of age. However, what happens when the prefrontal lobe and frontal cortex are compromised due to faulty brain wiring and sensory traffic jams, such as seen in autism spectrum disorders, attention deficit disorders, anxiety disorders, mood disturbances, behaviour disorders, post-traumatic disorders, poverty, attachment disorders?

This two-day seminar will address practical strategies that meet the needs of those children and adolescents who are impacted by these differences in their brain maturation. However, the participant will realize that these strategies apply to ALL students! The purpose is to provide practical tools for those clinicians, educators, therapists or parents who are directly involved in working with children and adolescents. This seminar is designed for those who are "working in the trenches."

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Participant will be able to label metacognitive and self-regulation strands for executive functioning components.
- Participant will be able to list visual strategies that support communication, social and behaviour skills
- Participant will be able to troubleshoot and identify strategies from case study examples of children/adolescents who have difficulty with inhibitory control, working memory, emotional control, mental rigidity
- Participant will be able to create at least three strategies to meet the needs of an individual student identified who lacks self-regulation.
- Participant will be able to discriminate functions of behaviour and determine if it is a tantrum or a meltdown.
- Participant will be able to identify and intervene when student is overstimulated and has sensory breakdowns.
- Participant will be able to determine which techniques to use to prevent, intervene, or stop targeted behaviours.
- Participant will be able to implement a "system" rather than a person dependent intervention.

AGENDA & KEY TOPICS

Drawing on over 45 years of professional experience, Kathy will lead you through dynamic discussions, video case examples and demonstrations providing dozens of strategies (30+) you can implement immediately with children/adolescents in any setting.

Walk away with an array of practical strategies for:

- Preventing and de-escalating meltdowns
- Teaching and promoting visual supports when mental rigidity is apparent
- Providing instructional consequences/replacement behaviours
- Developing self-control and self-management skills
- Addressing inhibitory control.....and more!



Gordon Neufeld, Ph.D., is a Vancouver-based developmental psychologist with over 45 years of

experience with children and youth and those responsible for them. A foremost authority on child development, Dr. Neufeld is an international speaker, a bestselling author (*Hold On To Your Kids*) and a leading interpreter of the developmental paradigm. Dr. Neufeld has a widespread reputation for making sense of complex problems and for opening doors for change.

12 HOURS | 12 CEUs

Monday, April 27, 2020 &
Tuesday, April 28, 2020

Available On-Demand Until
April 1, 2021

REGISTRATION FEE

Individual **\$469**

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PREREQUISITES/CREDITS

This course is designed for entry level and as such has no requirement regarding previous exposure. For teachers, this course makes an excellent follow-up to the Teachability courses and as a companion to the courses on Bullying and Counter will and Attention Problems. Continuing education credit is usually arranged through the host organizations.

AIRS: MONDAY, APRIL 27 & TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 2020 | AVAILABLE ON-DEMAND UNTIL APRIL 1, 2021

MAKING SENSE OF AGGRESSION

GORDON NEUFELD, PH.D.

ATTEND BOTH DR. NEUFELD
WEBINARS & SAVE!
3 PART SERIES FOR \$619

One of the foremost interpreters of the developmental approach tackles one of the oldest and most perplexing of human problems, exposing its deep developmental roots and revealing why conventional approaches to the problem are so ineffective. There are many indications that this problem is escalating among our children and youth. What tends to grab our attention is the more violating acts of aggression but what is truly alarming is the ground swell of attacking energy within and between our kids that erupts in their interaction, music, language, play, games and fantasies. This attacking energy is also fueling an alarming increase in suicide and suicidal ideation among children. Dr. Neufeld provides a way of understanding that not only explains what is happening around us but also provides insight into the individuals - both children and adults - who present with these problems. His approach is refreshingly sensible, historically accountable, and congruent with today's science of the brain. His conceptual model has clear implications for practice and treatment and is applicable in any arena: home, school or in treatment.

The key to making sense of aggression is to get past the violating behaviour to the emotional experience of the child and to what is missing in the child's processing or functioning. The underlying experience is one of frustration, not anger as is commonly supposed. What is missing are vulnerable feelings as well as a consciousness of anything that would counter the impulses to attack. Such children are inclined to attack when up against things they cannot change. Such children are also unable to benefit from traditional means of discipline such as correction, confrontation, consequences and isolation. It is only as the roots of the problem are addressed that aggression can be effectively cured.

Aggression is one of the oldest and most challenging of human problems and indications are, that in children at least, it is on the rise. What tends to grab our attention is the more violating acts of aggression but what is truly alarming is the ground swell of attacking energy within and between our kids that erupts in their interaction, their music, their language, their play, their games and their fantasies. It is the rare parent or teacher that does not encounter aggression in one form or another, be it tantrums, tempers, fits, abrasiveness, abusive language, rude gestures, hostility, racism, taunts, put-downs, bullying, fighting, shaming, belittling, name calling, vicarious enjoyment of violence or the self-attacking forms of self-deprecation, death wishes and self-harm. It is a sobering reality that the kids who fail to grow out of aggression by school age will most likely bring their problem into adulthood, unless the underlying dynamics are addressed.

AGENDA & KEY TOPICS

Frustration, Attachment & Aggression

- A working definition of aggression
- The many faces of aggression, including suicide
- Recognizing the nonviolent forms of aggression
- The role of frustration in aggression
- The role of attachment in aggression

Tears, Temper and Attack

- Aggression as problem of adaptation
- Impulsiveness, integration and the aggression problem
- The displacement effect in aggression
- The flight from vulnerability and the temper problem
- The role of the prefrontal cortex in aggression

Handling and Reducing Incidents & Violence

- Why conventional approaches backfires with aggression
- Why consequences and time-outs are counterindicated in the treatment of aggression
- How to differentiate between aggressive behaviour and an aggression problem
- Differentiating between incident management and addressing the aggression problem
- Guidelines for incident management

Facilitating Alternate Outcomes to Aggression

- How to shift the focus from aggression to frustration
- How to foster a relationship with frustration
- How to uncover frustration from the camouflage of behaviour and emotion
- How to help children form nonviolent intentions

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Uncover the psychological roots of the aggression problem
- Recognize aggression in its many forms
- Provide a working model of aggression for purposes of assessment and intervention
- Appreciate the roots of the gender differences in aggression
- Learn to 'read' aggression effectively
- Reveal the role of the limbic system and the prefrontal cortex in aggression
- Differentiate between incident management and developmental progress
- Outline three basic steps towards addressing any aggression problem
- Provide an appreciation of the inverse relationship between adaptation and aggression
- Provide an understanding of why aggression is increasing among children and why aggression is a part of so many syndromes and disorders
- Outline six pivotal points of intervention in the aggression problem
- Provide an appreciation of why the conventional methods of behaviour management don't work with aggression
- Equip participants to handle personal attacks
- Equip with strategies to help the immature grow out of their aggression problem



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experience with children and youth and those responsible for them. A foremost authority on child development, Dr. Neufeld is an international speaker, a bestselling author (*Hold On To Your Kids*) and a leading interpreter of the developmental paradigm. Dr. Neufeld has a widespread reputation for making sense of complex problems and for opening doors for change.

6 HOURS | 6 CEUs

Wednesday, April 29, 2020

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PREREQUISITES/CREDITS

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AIRS: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29, 2020 | AVAILABLE ON-DEMAND UNTIL APRIL 1, 2021

BULLIES: THEIR MAKING & UNMAKING
GORDON NEUFELD, PH.D.

ATTEND BOTH DR. NEUFELD WEBINARS & SAVE!
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Once we understand how bullies are made, our attempts to unmake them can be truly effective and long-lasting. Most prevailing approaches to this problem assume that bullying is either learned behaviour or the result of failure to acquire social skills. In contrast, Dr. Neufeld dissects the bully syndrome to reveal its deep instinctive roots in the dynamics of attachment and vulnerability.

Most attempts to change bullies, or even to teach them a lesson, are not only futile but counterproductive. The reason for this is that most interventions are blind, devoid of an understanding of what makes a bully in the first place. Part of the problem is that the bully is an enigma. There are at least three reasons for this. First of all, very few bullies would identify themselves as such or confess to the act. Secondly, bullies lack self-reflection and so cannot tell us about themselves. Thirdly, the violating nature of the bully's behaviour distracts from the salient issues and underlying dynamics. The symptoms are social but the dysfunction is psychological. The arena of violation is in children's relating to each other but the genesis of the problem is in relationship to adults. The demeanour is one of toughness yet the sensitivity to slight is acute. The behaviour is pushy and demanding yet the personality is highly dependent and immature. Unless we can shed some light into the internal workings of the bully, our interventions will inevitably be off base.

The key to making sense of the bully is not in what the bully does, but rather in what is missing in the bully. When one gets past the violating behaviour to the underlying functioning, gaping holes become apparent. Firstly, the bully lacks a sense of responsibility. There are usually two reasons for this deficiency: a) a lack of an underlying sense of agency or b) the child is too defended against vulnerability to feel responsible. Both appear to be true in the bully. To spend effort trying to make the bully accountable does little to change this state of affairs and only convinces the bully that adults are against him or her, which hardens the bully even further. If the bully was capable of feeling responsible, he or she would not be a bully in the first place.

Secondly, the bully lacks adaptive functioning. The bully cannot deal with change and therefore seeks the familiar. The bully does not learn from mistakes, benefit from negative experience, or change as a result of failure. Bullies are neither resourceful nor resilient. Adults who are unaware of this dysfunction will inevitably insist on upping the ante: applying more consequences, teaching a lesson they hope the bully will never forget. If the child was adaptive, he or she would not be a bully in first place. Consequences work wonders for those who can feel the futility of a course of action. On the other hand, consequences only enrage and provoke those who cannot.

AGENDA & KEY TOPICS

Introduction

- How bullies are begotten: the overview
- Bullying rooted in instinct and emotion
- Bullying as alpha instincts gone awry
- The modus operandi of the bully

The Bully's Vulnerability Problem

- The making of the bully's vulnerability problem
- The traits deriving from the vulnerability problem
- The bully and immaturity

The Bully's Attachment Problem

- The making of the bully's attachment problems
- The traits deriving from the attachment problems
- The union of the two problems - attachment and vulnerability
- Peer orientation and bullying

Challenges In The Unmaking Of Bullies

- Bully behaviour - the tip of the iceberg
- What doesn't work
- The unmaking of bullies
- Best prevention

"I have no words to express my appreciation to Gordon Neufeld and to Hirose for bringing this valuable, life-changing information. The material taught resonates professionally and personally too. Thank you!"

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this course is to make sense of the bully from inside out, and from this foundation of insight, prepare the way for change.

- Provide a working definition of bullying that will enable participants to recognize the bully dynamic in its myriad manifestations and across a multitude of settings
- Make sense of the bully from inside out and from a foundation of understanding, to outline the steps required for lasting change
- Create an understanding of the role of escalating peer orientation and of current parenting practices in fostering the bullying dynamic
- Convey why conventional discipline and social learning approaches can make matters worse
- Provide the conceptual tools - specifically attachment theory and vulnerability theory - to dissect the bully syndrome and uncover its instinctive roots
- Provide basic guidelines for addressing the bully problem that can be employed in a variety of venues and settings
- Outline the most significant factors in keeping students safe
- 12 traits of the bully syndrome traced to their roots
- Role of the limbic system (emotional brain) in bully making