

Executive Functioning Strategies to Support Student Independence

Before Assignment/Task

- Goals: post lesson goals, help students develop their own goals for content and process
- Chunk--divide tasks or directions into small, accomplishable chunks
- Create visual supports and cues
 - Signs and labels for directions
 - Checklists, checklists, checklists for multi-step tasks!
 - Color code to help organize and focus
- Idea Parking Lot (aka "1-minute anything and everything")
 - Share thoughts or ideas that may be distracting during the task
- Plan (and then assess) how long tasks/projects/assignments will take
 - Visual: time [bubbles](#); monthly calendar; planner
 - Strategize about how to be flexible and problem solve
- Routines and consistency
 - Ex: daily schedule in the same place; homework basket by door

During Assignment/Task

- Breaks and Movement:
 - Chair Push Ups (to help regulate body, get the wiggles out safely)
 - Seat Stretchy Bands, velcro under desk, etc.
- Task initiation and persistence
 - Have students take a tiny first step, and celebrate! (*A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step...*)
 - Visual Timers--clear start and end times
 - [Pomodoro Technique](#)--25 min timer, 5 min break
- Graphic organizers-- help students follow directions, stay on task, and process information more effectively

After Assignment/Task

- Exit tickets: Reflect at the end of each day, activity, or chunk:
 - What went well? What did you learn? What do you want to remember?
 - Check in on goals, time estimates, etc.
 - Emotion check ins-- how did student feel before, during, and after task? (emotions impact executive functioning!)
- Provide extra time to finish but don't take away recess or break.
- Provide organization time at the end of class.
 - Work with a buddy to check planners, cross off tasks, etc.
 - Encourage systems that works for the student, even if it's not your style (i.e. color coding, folders, ABC, fun pens, etc)
 - Planners-- the key to chunking and completing tasks
 - Create a concrete plan to finish next steps

Other

- _____
- _____

Bonus Resources

- [Backpack Checklist](#) from Understood.org

Homework Questions From: "'We Do Care,' Say Parents" by Regina Mistretta in *Teaching Children Mathematics*, May 2013 (Vo. 19, #9, p. 572-580), www.nctm.org

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| What have you done so far? | What do you already know that can help you work through the problem? |
| What do the directions say? | What problem are you working on? Can you tell me where you are stuck? |
| What words or directions don't you understand? | What if you draw a picture or make a diagram? |
| Where could/should you begin? | Can you explain what the teacher asked you to do? |
| Do you have similar problems to look at? | |