How AT can support Executive Function for Greater Independence and Success

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What we will do

- Define Executive Function
- Discuss Intervention when Executive Function is impaired
  - Skills we need to teach
  - How to teach them
  - Tools and strategies to consider
Executive Function

How the brain takes in information, organizes that information and does something with it.
They can’t do ANYTHING unless I’m sitting right beside them!

She is SO DISTRACTED!

She never knows how to get started!

He loses EVERYTHING!
Executive Function Areas Important for School Function

Organization
Planning
Working Memory
Time Management
Metacognition
What Skills do we Teach?

• How to Read-a-Room

• How to be a Future Thinker
Sarah Ward and Situational Intelligence

Needed for executive control

Situational Intelligence is the ability to Read a Room
The Ability to READ A ROOM

Think of the acronym STOP
SPACE: You need to be aware of it and what usually happens in it. Where am I? What’s going on right now? Is it expected/unexpected?
TIME: What is happening right now? What is coming up? What pace is required?
OBJECTS: What do I need? Where will I get it? How are things organized here?
PEOPLE: What’s my role? Who else is here and what are they doing?
Assistive Technology to Consider to Support the Ability to Read a Room

Sensory Modulation Tools and Materials

STOP sign visual tool
Visuals

Space- What is going on? What is expected and unexpected?
Time- What is happening right now?
Objects- What do I need? Where will I get it?
People- What's my role?
Teaching How to be a FUTURE Thinker

90% of the time task planning happens in a different space from where you execute the plan.

When executive function is impaired, a mental picture of the future is often absent.
Assistive Technology to Consider to Support the Ability to be a FUTURE THINKER

• Feature blocking visuals
• Backpack tag
• Get Ready, Do, Done tools
Feature Blocking Visuals
Backpack Tags
Get Ready, Do, Done Materials

Designed by Sarah Ward to develop situational awareness, create plans by future thinking, organize materials, time and steps to complete a task.
Get Ready

DO

Done
Working Clock

Makes passage of time visual

Time markers can be added to monitor progress in the Do list
Visual Timers
My Power Clock
While it is important to teach executive function skills, we also find value in encouraging greater independence and self-confidence when these skills are not yet mastered.
Can Plan iPad app
Octopus by Joy
Digital Audio Recording Pen
Take Away

Teach **Reading a Room** and **Future Thinking**

Low tech assistive technology to support these skills

Additional assistive technology may enhance these skills and compensate for them, while developing independence and confidence.
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