

IF I'M SO SMART, WHY IS SCHOOL SO HARD?

Supporting Students with Asperger Syndrome in Elementary General Education Classrooms

Executive Function Support

Planning and organization

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Executive Function Supports

- **Get the student's buy-in for supports that you suggest:**
 - "These ideas might help you finish your work sooner. That leaves more time for _____"
 - I have an idea that I think will really help you get your work done in class. This will be great because you will have less homework to do.
- **Analyze tasks to determine the purpose. Eliminate difficult functions that aren't related to the purpose. (if purpose is to capture an idea-handwriting is not a necessary function.)**

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Executive Function Supports

- Give up the idea that the student should “just know.” If they need to know, tell them.
- Tell students the purpose of the task. Ex: If it is a rough draft, don’t worry about handwriting and spelling.
- Use concept maps, Venn diagrams, other graphic organizers. Make sure that the information is understood to avoid meaningless memorization.

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Executive Function Supports

- Provide an agenda or assignment book-monitor it’s use.
 - Ensure that student has assignments recorded correctly.
 - Consider online assignment sheets, a weekly written assignment sheet or a syllabus.
 - Refer to it frequently and check it’s accuracy.
 - Events/assignments that are scheduled for the future may need to be referred to every day.
- Model calendar keeping, list making and other memory-enhancing strategies. Talk about what you do and why.

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Executive Function Support

- **Notebook and assignment routine:**
 - Schedule in the notebook
 - Pouch for all writing tools and materials
 - Color-coded pocket folders for each subject
 - Assignment agenda in the notebook-adapted as necessary
 - Necessary teacher prompts to consistently place new work, study guides and finished work in specific notebook locations
 - List for “notebook check” How often monitored? By whom?

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Executive Function Support

- Include a **“Notebook check” list in the front of the note book so that any adult at home or school can check the notebook**

Note book check

- schedule
- assignment sheets up to date
- papers in binder or in pockets
- option cards

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Executive Function Support

- Create **“task cards” with student (ex: organizing back pack) to support working memory and executive function.**
- **Help student break large tasks down into smaller chunks—make it visual.**
- **Teach routines for commonly occurring tasks or activities-write them down.**
- **Teach the concept of “Plan B” or “Zigger Zagger days”**

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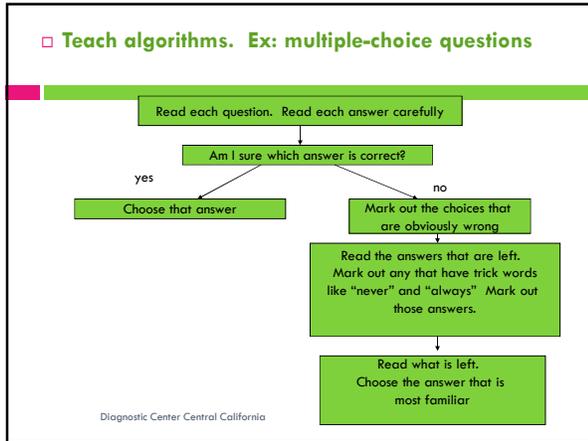
Executive Function Support

- **Have the student keep a notebook or filebox of helpful strategies. Teach how to look for a strategy that might help for a specific assignment.**

Teach the concept of “Zoom in-Zoom out”

- **Zoom in is looking at details.**
- **Zoom out is looking at big picture.**

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- Supporting Initiation**
- Increase organization around the task.
 - Rehearsal (role playing)
 - Create an “expectation of initiation”
 - Time timer
 - Coaching the first problem, sentence, etc.
 - Proximity
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General Classroom Supports

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Considerations for assignments

- Does it need to be more visually clear?
- Are the directions explicit?
- Does the content need to be simplified?
- Does the amount of content need to be reduced?
- Does the method of recording responses need to be changed?

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Example of an explicit assignment

Folder 2 (science)

Complete the following steps. REMEMBER to cross off each step as you complete it.

1. Read all of the directions first-(read the directions ONLY, then go back to number 2 and do what it says)
2. Read pages 34-38 in your book, "Airplanes of World War II"
3. Write 2 paragraphs about the information you read in the book. Each paragraph should have 5 sentences.
4. When you have finished writing, put your paper in the "finished assignments" bin on Mrs. Mates desk.
5. Check in your notebook for what is next on your daily schedule.

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Supports for Instructions and Testing

- Written instructions above a beyond those for peers:
 - Does student need a written list for each assignment that concretely shows the sequence of steps?
 - Does the list need to include organizational assistance ("get the 'precipitation' worksheet from your science folder", or "use pages 12-15 for this assignment")
- Highlight words in a unit, in problems, in text to assure recognition of the most relevant information

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Additional Classroom Ideas

- If it is important, make it concrete and visual
- Use his special interests when possible
- Allow student to use his own methods when possible (and effective)
- Use timers
- Use speaking ball or object

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Additional Classroom Ideas

- Always use teacher selected groups
- Give plenty of "think time" after you ask a question
- Encourage mistakes
- Keep the flow in information between home and school open
- If child talks to himself as he works, encourage "whispered thoughts"
- Create a code for asking for help

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