AUTISM TRAINING
and Technical Assistance Project

Strategies to Support Executive Functioning Skills

Planning

- Daily schedule
- School planner
- Task schedule
- Homework planner – homework log (make it a daily habit)
- Short- and Long-term assignment planner
- Measurable goals

Organization

- School materials organization system - one or several binders or folders
    - 1 binder – 3 ring pencil pouch with supplies, folders or dividers, clear labels, enough space
    - Several small binders for each subject: 1 for homework and supplies, folders, clear labels, enough space
- Home materials organization system
    - A place for everything, declutter, clean space
- Daily checklist – home to do checklist, school to do checklist
- Project organizer – think about the task, materials, steps, time, review (rubric)
- Work/task checklist
- Weekly check – re-organize, clean out unnecessary materials

Time Management

- Estimate the time it takes to complete a task
- Pace yourself – adjusting pace, break time, transition time
- Meet your deadlines – write in calendar or planner, chuck project, mini-deadlines, start right away, plan due date for a few days before the real due date
- Work-Leisure Balance
- Prioritize Tasks – list tasks and order them first to last
- Set Short- and Long-term Goals
- Minimize Distractions (ex. cell phone – out of sight, silent, turn it off)
- Time planner

Task Initiation

- **Overcome procrastination – task plan, chunk task, reminders, self-talk, get unstuck, REWARD**
- **Cues and Reminders – alarm/reminder, sticky notes, self-talk**
- **Unstuck strategies – reread, reword, research online, teacher clarification, ask a friend**
- **Reward yourself – what are you working for?**
- **Getting started planning**

Working Memory

- **Write down directions**
- **Take a picture of long directions**
- **Repeat important information**
- **Make a connection to the information**
- **Paraphrase – into your own words**

Metacognition

- **Know your skill level – work on improving skills**
- **Know your learning style**
    - **Visual (pictures, images, graphic organizer), auditory (music, sound), verbal (read and write to learn, word games), physical (hands on, through movement), logical (use logic, reasoning, scientific approach), social (best work and study done with a group), solitary (best work and study done alone)**
- **Understand learning target or outcome**
- **Self-monitor & evaluate learning**

Self-Control

- **Identify signals of losing control**
- **Stop & Think**
- **I-statements "I feel emotion when when it happens because why it happens. Next time I could what you would like to happen.**
- **Other anger management strategies – breathe, exercise, break/space, music, solution-focused**
- **Helpful Training & Curriculum on Self-Control:**
    - **Social Thinking www.socialthinking.com**
    - **Zones of Regulation www.zonesofregulation.com**

Sustained Attention

- **Pay attention**
    - **Behaviors that improve attention – take notes, raise hand, eye-contact, self-talk, start work immediately**
- **Keep focused**
    - **Use a fidget, doodle, ask for notes, take breaks**
- **Shift focus**

- **Take notes closer to the board or overhead, ask for a copy of the notes, give yourself reminders to get started, use self-talk, avoid distractors**

Flexibility

- **Cope with change**
  - **Acknowledge feelings, identify the positive, use self-talk, accept uncertainty**
- **Handle frustration**
  - **Find the good in a bad situation**
  - **Manage stress with activities you love, talk with a friend, self-care (eat, sleep), cut out optional obligations that you don't enjoy**
- **Perspective**
  - **Consider how others feel or think**
- **Try new things**

Perseverance

- **Hard work pays off (what's the pay off – good grades, learning, goal achievement)**
- **Stick with it – remember your goal, use self-talk, take a break, reflect on what happened with a past task you stuck with to the end**
- **Encourage yourself – celebrate small accomplishments**
- **Know when to ask for help**

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