

The Executive Skill Lending Library

Attention

1. Provide supervision: Notice or describe what you see instead of judging. Describing and noticing focuses attention. Judgment is about the worth of the person, moment or situation.
2. Use attention signals, songs.
3. Show how long it will take and how long is left (visual depiction).
4. Make the task interesting and fun.

Time Management

1. Create a predictable daily routine and show it in pictures. Reference this visual daily routine often.
2. Talk about how long it takes to do things. Children don't truly understand time until second grade.
3. Make picture calendars and schedules for children.

Organization

1. Adults put a system in place, involving children as much as possible.
2. Supervise and guide the children.
3. If parents are organizationally challenged, help them with picture books to provide lunch or organize backpacks.

Prioritization

1. Create a "Let's make a plan!" book/chart with the child's help. Write/photograph steps.
2. Involve the child as much as possible. Ask, "What do we need to do first?"
3. "You can _____ when _____ is done."
4. Teach planning and prioritization with activities they love first. Later, help them plan to clean their room.
5. Give simple one or two-step commands. "We will stand up and walk safely to the door. It looks like this (demonstrate)."

Working Memory

1. Make eye contact before giving instructions.
2. Keep external distractions to a minimum (turn off music, etc.)
3. Provide picture reminders of what to do.
4. Have the child repeat back what you said. Make a chant.



1. Rehearse with the child right before the action. “When we buy the ticket to the zoo, you will 1 _____, 2 _____. Let’s practice.” “Let’s think of some words we could use to encourage our friends. Let’s practice them now.”
2. Come up with fun ways to remember things.
3. Sing a lot. Use call and response prompts. “My job is to keep you _____.” “Safe!”
4. Offer frequent reminders. “Remember to push in your chairs, so your friends are safe.”

Impulse Control / Emotional Regulation

1. Teach routines and display them in pictures.
2. Create a “What Bugs Me” book (know triggers).
3. Teach stress reduction strategies for the Safe Place. Help children be conscious of emotional outcomes (anger = hitting) and then help them change them (anger = calm down, ask for what you want).
4. Teach a problem-solving script (Time Machine).
5. Read stories where characters display the behaviors you want children to learn (Shubert books).
6. Regulate the environment as needed so children are not over-stimulated.

Flexibility

1. Reduce novelty by introducing one thing at a time.
2. Provide advance warning for what’s coming next (use pictures if possible).
3. Give children the script for handling anxiety (I’m safe, keep breathing, I can handle this).
4. Break down tasks one step at a time.
5. Give choices.
6. Create social stories.
7. Create a “What To Do When Your Brain Gets Stuck” book.
8. Walk children through the anxiety-producing situation, taking pictures of the steps and creating a book/chart.

Empathy

1. Notice the faces of children and speak for them until they learn their own voice. “His face is going like this (demonstrate). It’s saying, ‘Ouch! Hitting hurts! Touch me like this.’”
2. Notice, describe and label instead of judge. “Marcus scooted over so Latisha had more space. That was helpful.”
3. Notice the body, reflect feelings and then reflect desires of the child during upset moments.

Metacognition

1. Constantly ask how children feel about their efforts, accomplishments, work, friends, etc. “How does it feel to have worked all day on your project and now it’s finished?” “How does it



feel to have two Ds on your report card? Is that okay with you?"

2. Ask them to reflect on their work, hobbies, etc. "How do you think you did in the play?" "What was one of your favorite parts?" "Would you do something like this again?" "Would you change anything?"
3. Create pictures of what clean, finished, etc., looks like.
4. Teach children questions to ask themselves. "Do I have enough space at circle?" "Do my friends have enough space?" "What would help me pay attention better?"
5. Think out loud to model for children. "I'll put the book I am going to read at circle time next to my chair so I am prepared." "I'm going to take a deep breath to calm myself down."

Goal Persistence / Achievement

1. Child states what he/she wants to achieve. Make a commitment.
2. Encourage the child every step of the way at first, then back off.
3. "That's it. Look at you. You're doing it. You're (describe action)."
4. Provide positive feedback in regards to effort, time and progress. "You stuck with your project and you are half way through!" "Days ago, you had an idea started, and now you'll have it finished by tomorrow. Good for you."
5. Gradually build up the time needed to reach goals. Start with goals reachable within a few minutes or less than an hour.
6. Make visual charts to show progress.
7. Celebrate achievements.

Task Initiation

1. Help the child develop his or her options, and then choose one to start with.
2. Verbalize the beginning of the project to build awareness. "You chose to ____." "You began with ____." "You listened to the story and now you've chosen to ____."
3. Prompt the child if help is needed, "You could begin by _____," or offer choices, "You could begin your homework by starting with math or by starting with reading."
4. Follow the child's successful start with encouragement in the form of "You did it," or "Good for you."

Developmental Order Skills

- Impulse control (6 - 12 months)
- Working memory (6 - 12 months)
- Emotional control/empathy (6 - 12 months)
- Attention (6 - 12 months)
- Planning/prioritization (6 - 12 months)
- Flexibility (12 - 24 months)
- Task initiation (12 - 24 months)
- Organization (Preschool)
- Time management (Preschool)
- Goal achievement (Elementary +)
- Metacognition (Elementary +)

