There’s H.O.P.E.!
Homework, Organization, and Planning Excellence

Jaime True-Daley, President, Learning Equalizer, LLC
Faculty Associate; Johns Hopkins University
National Board Certified Exceptional Needs Specialist
Jaime True-Daley, Ed.D.

- 19 years as special educator
- Grades 3-12
- Mild to moderate disabilities in all settings from non-public to co-teaching; 4 states, 1 territory
- Carroll County Teacher of the Year
- National Board Certification as Exceptional Needs Specialist since 2004
- School administrator 5 years
- Faculty associate 7 years
- Doctoral Fellow at JHU
- National and district-based research presentations

- Proud mother of 4 and wife of Mr. Gene Daley of Technology Solutions
You may be familiar with Maslow’s Hierarchy of Basic Psychological Needs (1943), which depicts a continuum of well-being that ranges from feeling safe to feeling self-actualized. Most education research measures success using mastery or self-efficacy measures. This paradigm reinforces the importance of normed standards and expectations. That is, we value what the norm expects us to master, and when we do master the norm, we feel good about ourselves. For example, a child who follows school rules and receives a PBIS reward is happy and continues to follow the rules. On the other hand, individuals with executive functioning difficulties may feel oppositional toward externally imposed norms. Studies suggest that children with emotional disabilities require greater autonomy, and children with learning disabilities benefit from strong relationships to transcend feelings of failure over externally imposed norms. Without autonomy-supportive relationships, they may adjust to their environment by rejecting the norm and creating their own definition of success. Using the following strategies, you can help nurture your child toward knowing their strengths, channeling their energy toward valuable goals, and improving their overall well-being.
Objective

You will learn evidence-based strategies to promote homework, organization, and planning excellence for your children with executive functioning difficulties.
Warm Up

Directions:
1. Remember the last time your child had to do homework?
2. Use the chart to evaluate the process.
3. Calculate the score.
Structured Discussion

Directions:
1. Line up by score from lowest to highest.
2. Think about your highest score – why was that better than others?
3. Walk-Pair-Share
4. Success Analysis: Take turns actively listening to each other describe your success.
Class Dojo is a free web-based program accessible through a student code that helps teachers, students, and parents communicate progress toward behavioral objectives. Students are awarded points for achieving their targeted objective, and points accumulate. With the points, students earn access to the incentive of customizing their avatars.
One of the most significant bodies of neuroscience research focuses on the executive functioning processes in the brain. Executive functioning (EF), as a term, holds multiple characteristics, but consistent definitions classify EF as the umbrella under which several inter-related, cognitive processes work to plan and execute a goal (Marchetta, Hurks, Krabbendam, & Jolles, 2008). Neuropsychologists refer to the cognitive processes using varied terms and models, dependent on the literary audience and measures used in studies. For example, Barkley (2012) and Brown (2008) specialize in Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD/ADHD), use rating scales to diagnose executive functioning disorders (EFD), and provide resources to parents and educators. They refer to six implications of executive dysfunction in students with ADD, which include; (a) activation, (b) focus, (c) effort, (d) emotion, (e) memory, and (f) action (Barkley, 2012; Brown, 2008). Neuropsychologists conducting experimental studies with subjects using neuroimaging and psychological tests tend to refer to the executive functioning processes as; (a) planning, (b) inhibiting, (c) shifting, (d) impulse control, (e) working memory, and (f) monitoring (see Jurado & Rosselli, 2007, for review). Importantly, neuropsychologists have determined that the complex process of goal achievement is conducted mostly in the pre-frontal cortex, with communications throughout the brain’s networks that can be interrupted, impeded, or damaged throughout the lifespan as a part of development or aging, and as a characteristic of many disabilities (Elliott, 2003).

In typically developing children, executive functions evolve from birth through about age 14 (Romaine & Reynolds, 2005). As young as age two, children demonstrate inhibition, or the ability to sustain attention on completing a task without becoming diverted to a competing stimulus (Romine & Reynolds, 2005). Between the ages of five and eight, children demonstrate greater impulse control and the ability to shift from one task to another when expected to do so (Romine & Reynolds, 2005). By age 14, working memory (the ability to apply a known in order to complete a novel task), planning
(selecting an effective and accurate strategy for completing a task), and *initiating* (beginning a task with an efficient and accurate strategy to complete it) mature. EF development stagnates between ages 14 through 17, then, *planning* maturity increases slightly through age 22 (see Romine & Reynolds, 2005 for a meta-analysis on frontal lobe development). Given the developmental stages of EF, educators and parents should adjust their expectations and supports for children accordingly.
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Rub your hands
Snap your fingers
Pat your thighs
Stomp your feet
Reverse the steps

Variation: After stomping, jump up high out of your seat and yell "Kaboom!"
Instructional mismatch: Above instructional level for reading, writing, comprehension; Not accessible, or lack of accessible materials (e.g. textbooks online with screen reader); Too much (should be 10 minutes per grade); Difficulty of Common Core processes

Executive functioning: Must have external prompting and constant support to accomplish non-preferred tasks (homework)
Does your child have a self-management or behavior goal on the IEP?
Does your child have supplementary aids and services to support progress-making?
Consider using the "Request for IEP Amendment" worksheet to identify possible supports that might help.

1. Instructional level practice: Homework can be modified to match the child's instructional reading and math level. This may be different than what other students are completing for homework. However, you may prefer your child to engage in homework successfully and make progress rather than to resist and fail.
2. Web-based programs:
   1. Reading A to Z / www.RAZ-KIDS.com
   2. FrontRow
3. Accessible materials
   1. Learning Ally
   2. Book Share
   3. NIMAS
4. Low-tech reading and writing
   1. Self-selected text plus reading log (10 minutes per grade level)
   2. Writing journal (5 sentences per grade level)
   3. Targeted math facts (10 minutes focused time)
   4. Timed readings for fluency
   5. Magazine Talks (Common Core Friendly!)
IEP Driven Homework

- Pros and Cons
- Is it the least restrictive option?
- Are there potential harmful effects?

- Modified homework:
  - Reduced length (e.g. half of the questions required)
  - Reduced difficulty (e.g. simplified questions provided)
  - Provide homework aligned to IEP objectives
  - Eliminate homework not aligned to IEP objectives
  - Do not count homework toward a grade
  - Submit homework electronically through email or shared drive
  - Complete web-based program such as RAZ-Kids or FrontRow for homework
  - Provide a structured homework routine (e.g. 10 minutes fact practice, 30 minutes self-selected reading with reading log, 5 sentences in writing journal)
  - Provide copies of textbooks for the home environment
  - Provide access to a text to speech program such as Learning Ally or Book Share so texts may be read aloud

- Parent-Student-Teacher Communication
  - Use a self-monitoring tool to regulate homework completion
  - Provide incentives and remove privileges related to homework “contract.”
  - Teacher provides access to homework assignments electronically, such as by email, website, shared drive, or Google Classroom
  - Teacher provides notes and other instructional materials electronically
  - Teacher shares a web-based calendar or uses programs such as “Remind.com” to communicate important dates for tests, etc.
RAZ-Kids: Raz-Kids delivers comprehensive reading resources at 27 levels of reading difficulty. And with the Kids A-Z mobile app, Raz-Kids customers have free mobile access to every leveled eBook and corresponding eQuiz. All student activity on Raz-Kids is captured and reported to teachers online through the Kids A-Z management hub — making it easy for you to track individual and class-wide reading progress and determine future instruction needs.

Front Row Ed: Personalized math and reading comprehension practice your students will love. By addressing student weaknesses and building off strengths, Front Row is designed to increase confidence and promote growth in ALL students, regardless of their ability level.

Learning Ally: Unlock your potential with access to the world’s largest library of human-narrated audiobooks. Use Learning Ally applications to easily download books to your Apple or Android smartphones and tablets, PC or Mac computers, Chromebooks or other devices.

Study Island: Our online K-12 math, ELA, science, and social studies learning solutions are designed specifically for the home.
Consider using Google Sites templates to create an E-Portfolio that highlights student work and goal achievement. Your student can share with others and receive feedback and encouragement.
"Responsibility means doing something even though you don't want to do it."

1. **Have a plan**
   1. Use the self-monitoring tool to write a goal and make a contract for improvement
      1. Low-tech: copy onto shipping labels and stick to index cards on a ring or in a box
      2. Class Dojo: use a code to easily communicate success rates in each area, in each class, between home and school
   2. **System**: Same time, same place, every day. Begin with full physical support and release as goal is achieved in each area.

2. **Organize**
   1. Determine a reliable schedule for HOMEWORK, relaxation, family-time, meals, etc.
   2. Follow the HOMEWORK routine religiously

3. **Celebrate**:
   1. Be loud! Say (even sarcastically) "You did it!" "Proud of you!" do a cheer, give a high five - over exaggerate the celebration to make it fun and memorable
   2. **Breaks**: Go Noodle, etc.
      1. Write break ideas on popsicle sticks and allow child to randomly draw one out of a cup to avoid decision making lag
      2. Exercise & meditation work best
   3. **Incentives**:
      1. Positive rewards (consider the hierarchy)
      2. Reinstate privileges (technology, etc)
Planning isn't developed until 23-27 years old! You are the adult in this non-reciprocal relationship.

Younger children:
- Use meal times as an anchor.
- What traditions or habits does your family enjoy?
- 3 STEPS:
  - Use fingers, touching, jumping, etc to remember how many steps
  - Repeat with a fun tone (ex. talk like a mouse or a ghost)
  - Provide positive feedback for what was remembered

Older children:
- Use calendar apps such as Outlook, Google calendar
- Use applications such as Remind.com
Follow the HOMEWORK routine!
1. Have a moment to play (together) - compete to find the differences between two pictures - this gets the brain ready to focus
2. Organize
3. Materials - make sure the student has everything needed to complete assignments
4. Engage and
5. Work for 10 minutes - set a timer and create a challenge to see how much can get accomplished accurately
6. Opt for a brain break - make this break physical. Try a yoga pose, take out the trash, or do something simple to reduce cognitive load.
7. Return to work - don’t forget to set a timer and race the clock
8. Keep the cycle going until work is complete - Stop at step 4 (HOME)
   1. Have a moment to celebrate! Review the self-monitoring chart, scream YAHOO!
   2. Organize
   3. Materials that need to return to school, and place them by the door.
   4. Engage in something home-oriented.
Find the Differences
Help your child determine primary distractions, and try to eliminate them from the environment where tasks are to be completed. Providing an appropriate sensory input may help channel difficulties in this area. For example, you may provide a fidget (e.g., stress ball, pipe cleaner, paper clip), music in the background, an image of a calming scene, and/or a countdown timer. You can help your child identify distractions by encouraging her to tally the number of times she becomes distracted during a task, then discussing the distractions after completion. It’s definitely important to eliminate interruptions - turn off cell phones, etc.
One of the great strengths of individuals who struggle with executive functioning is their creative ability. They see the big picture and can develop a vision for how a task should look when complete. Start by discussing the end product, then discussing the steps to completion. Help your child consider how long each step might take. Help your child get started on the first step.
External prompting has been the only empirically supported practice linked to improved outcomes, but there are various ways to prompt. Control-oriented prompting offers a quick fix and usually produces immediate results but poor long-term effects and limited changes in overall behavior. For children with tendencies to respond impulsively and emotionally, control-oriented prompts can escalate negative or aggressive behavior. On the other hand, autonomy-supportive prompts can de-escalate frustration and build feelings of competence. Let’s consider a few scenarios.

What do the following scenarios look like and sound like?

1. Time to go to school
2. Homework time
3. Chores
If your child becomes hyper-focused on certain preferred activities, allow their use for designated periods of time, and count down to warn them that the time is ending. Provide a 3 minute, 2 minute, 1 minute, 15 second warning. Allow the child to shift independently whenever possible. For example, if the child is stuck on a video game, tell the child it’s time to turn it off. Provide positive encouragement to do so. Provide positive reinforcement when shifting occurs successfully.
If impulsivity is a primary concern, your child needs to learn how to predict triggers, identify positive ways to channel energy, and consider consequences. Using the BREaK strategy can help with identifying each feature of impulse control. To prevent impulsivity, provide physical and emotional outlets such as brain breaks and cognitive shifts. Brain breaks are short physical challenges to redistribute blood flow, such as a yoga pose or jumping jacks. A cognitive shift is redirecting emotional thoughts to rational thoughts. Cognitive shifts can be prompted by verbal fact-based questions (who, where, when) and by puzzles (mazes, word searches, jigsaw). After rationality is restored, allow time for reflection on the trigger and an opportunity to reflect on how well impulses were controlled.
Create a FREE Go Noodle account to explore countless fun brain breaks for all ages. Ultimate Champ Training is customized for each grade level K-7 and for various time frames (2-10 minutes).
Video self-modeling is one of the strongest evidence-based practices for learning new skills. When introducing a new skill, consider conducting a skit and video-taping it. Replay the skit prior to your child needing to perform the task. Take pictures of your child performing tasks successfully. When goals are set, record progress toward them on charts or in photo albums. Allow time for your child to discuss progress with others and receive feedback. Consider using a website or a social media site for this, so your child can receive positive attention for making progress toward goals.
Positive reinforcement is a highly supported evidence-based practice. Keep in mind that natural reinforcements build intrinsic motivation, while tangible reinforcements build a need for external control and reduce independence. Know what your child needs, and try to temper our natural tendency to over or under reward performance. The ARC of teaching suggests that social and activity reinforcements ARE autonomy-supportive. Whenever possible, use these tools to help your child increase motivation.
If all else fails:

- Reminder bracelets
- Timex Watch with alarm, timer, stopwatch
- i-pod pictures of teacher whiteboards
- Parent portal to review grades
- District website to review curriculum
- Homework station
The ARC of Caring

Autonomy
Relationships
Competence
Summary: The ARC of Caring

- “If we’re patient, impulsive students improve marvelously!”
- Autonomy-supportive relationships build competence and intrinsic motivation
- Strategies: Positive external prompting, visual monitoring tools, and frequent feedback
Please visit my website (www.learningequalizer.com) and contact me (jaimetrue@learningequalizer.com) with questions or requests for resources 😊 Thank you for the opportunity to share the evening with you!