The 360 Thinking Executive Function Model and Program

Executive functioning, or EF, refers to the set of thinking skills that are required for planning and self-monitoring the completion of all tasks we need to accomplish every day. These skills essentially navigate us through our day from the "driver's seat" rather than moving along like a passenger and being directed by others. Many programs begin with goal setting. However, our program begins with the thinking that needs to happen in order to set reasonable and attainable goals. In order to set goals that will help improve your executive functioning skills, you need to first gain a better awareness of ourselves and situations in which we plan to complete tasks. We refer to this first stage of executive functioning as situational awareness skills, or situational intelligence. This type of intelligence is not about facts that you learn in school that helps to make you more knowledgeable. Rather, this situational intelligence allows you to "stop and read the room" when you need to complete any goal.

There are four parts of a situation that we highlight in our program: space, time, objects and people. In any given moment in time, you have to manage this information going on around you in order to decide what the most important goal is for you to act on. For example, if you are a student in a study block at school, you have to be aware of the best *space* to be productive, the sequence of tasks or steps to accomplish over the specific *time* available, organize all the *objects* such as books and materials needed, and be able to communicate with *people* including other students and teachers as necessary to complete your work. It is challenging if you set a goal "to get all your work done" if any one of these four situational awareness skills are difficult to manage. In order to help you become more aware of your situational awareness skills, consider completing the questionnaire provided in this planner. If there is one area of situational awareness that can be more challenging for you than others, then it might be helpful to work with a parent or executive function coach on strategies to build that skill as your first goals. You can then use the planner to write down specific steps you would like to start taking to work towards your goals.

Task Planning and the Anticipatory Look

The Get Ready * Do * Done Model (GDD) is the methodology we have designed for students to develop situational awareness, create a plan by using *forethought* of the end result or goal in mind, and then organize all the materials, time and actions to complete a task. Essentially, we see that students best improve their planning skills when they learn "to see the future, say the future and feel the future." For students to accomplish this, they start by beginning all projects or assignments by sketching out a visual image of the final product. This can provide students with increased feelings of confidence and self-regulation when the complex description of a task can be visualized. Once the final outcome of a project or assignment is visible in a sketch form, that 'future sketch' can be referenced while breaking down the bigger task into manageable steps and parts. Teachers have seen many students benefit from being able to see what a finished assignment looks like before creating their own sketch. The steps to completing a task or assignment over the course of days and weeks can be recorded in the assignment planner.

Many students improve their ability to initiate a step towards completing a task when they specify a beginning and end point of an assignment on an analog clock, so they know exactly when they plan to start and when to stop. Sometimes, visual strategies, such as placing sticky notes or drawing with a dry erase marker on the beginning and end times of an analog clock, can help us visualize time goals even more.

Overall, our research has let us know that backwards planning from the end sketch gives us new insights. It helps us to really think through all the steps that we need to take as well as clarify or add new steps. It also helps us to think of potential problems or obstacles we could encounter. If we can anticipate potential obstacles, we may be able to prevent them. We also have a better perception of how time passes when we have thought through the end result of a task or assignment, and all the steps needed to reach that end. When we have a better sense of time, it helps us to better plan and organize our use of time!

Using the Get Ready * Do *Done Approach to Task Planning

Program Overview

Before you can initiate any assignments, it can help to use our multi-sensory strategies aimed to provide imagery and self-speech that supports planning of steps and time. Students, you can slip on your "future glasses" to help you see, say and feel a future project or assignment successfully completed. It is helpful for students to learn how to sketch the future picture of a project when

beginning to plan so EF coaching might be needed. The motivation to accomplish the end result is often best created when students visualize the future picture of a task completed and anticipate positive feelings with their accomplishment! Students can then "work their plan" that they have sketched out by beginning to gather their materials, take the necessary steps and compare their plan with the actual assignment. Periodically, it also helps if students can draw from their visualized image of the "Done" to help them "work backwards" in their thinking. After students learn to create the end sketch, then they can work on mastering the two other planning stages necessary for completing a project successfully: rehearsing the steps to "Do" and organizing the materials to "Get Ready".

Three Steps to Success - "Get Ready, Do, Done"

The planning process is taught as a sequential process with visual tools and specific verbal prompts (listed below) that teachers and parents can use as students are first learning the process. The visual tools and verbal prompts can gradually fade once students are able to create and hold the mental imagery of their plan. In order for students learn the executive function process of "planning backwards" to "move forwards" for completing tasks and assignments, they learn to create a plan for tasks by asking the following questions when looking at Get Ready*Do*Done planning page(s):

1) What will it look like when I am "Done"?
2) What steps do I need to take or "Do" to match my done image?
3) What materials will I need to "Get Ready"?

Once students anticipate what it will look like and feel like to be "Done", they engage in a mental dress rehearsal and practice visualizing the steps to "Do" the task, and determine what they will need to "Get Ready". To help students remember how to 'plan backwards', there are three different colored laminated mats or boards provided: red for "Done", green for "Do," and yellow for "Get Ready". Mats are also laminated so students can be 'future sketchers' and sketch images of the tasks to be accomplished as part of that particular step.

Once a student has sketched out their plan they are ready to carry out their plan. The yellow "Get Ready" mat reminds children to slow down and gather needed materials. Rather than having materials provided beforehand, children practice learning to locate and organize them on their own. The green "Do" mat shows how the student decided to divide the project up into specific steps (planning, organizing, and prioritizing). Step 2 also provides strategies for estimating and keeping track of time (temporal awareness), a skill often lacking in those with executive function challenges. To help master this skill, students are

provided with a clock with a glass face. Using a dry erase marker, they first practice sketching directly on the clock their estimated time for completing their project. Next, they sketch a starting time, a checkpoint and an ending time. Students are also provided with a timer so they can practice keeping track of their progress during the checkpoints (self-monitoring). Once they reach their checkpoint, children are then coached on how to identify and navigate around "time robbers." A list of examples can be provided, which are grouped into specific categories. Examples: "My Body" ("thirsty," "hungry," sleepy", "antsy"), "My Organizer" ("I can't find my assignments and papers," "I don't have a plan for how to do this"), "My Scope" ("I don't know how to start," "I'm trying to make this perfect"), and "My focus" ("I'm distracted by the computer or other electronic," "I'm socializing").

Students started planning with step 3 (Done) and return back to step 3 after completing their task for review. They also review their plan from start to finish to figure out what worked, what didn't work, and what if any changes to make when having to tackle a similar project in the future. They now have to "Get Done" and close out a task by putting materials away, cleaning up their workspace, and/or placing their completed project or assignment in its appropriate folder or location.

This process can be taught to students by teachers, special educators, therapists and parents who are trained in using this model. To learn more about the *360 Thinking Model,* including it's many other innovative strategies and tools and how they directly target core areas of executive control, log on to http://efpractice.com/. Readers are also referred to two recent articles written by Ward and Jacobsen, both referenced below.

References

Barkley, R.A. (2012). *Executive functions: What they are, how they work, and why they evolved.* New York: Guilford.
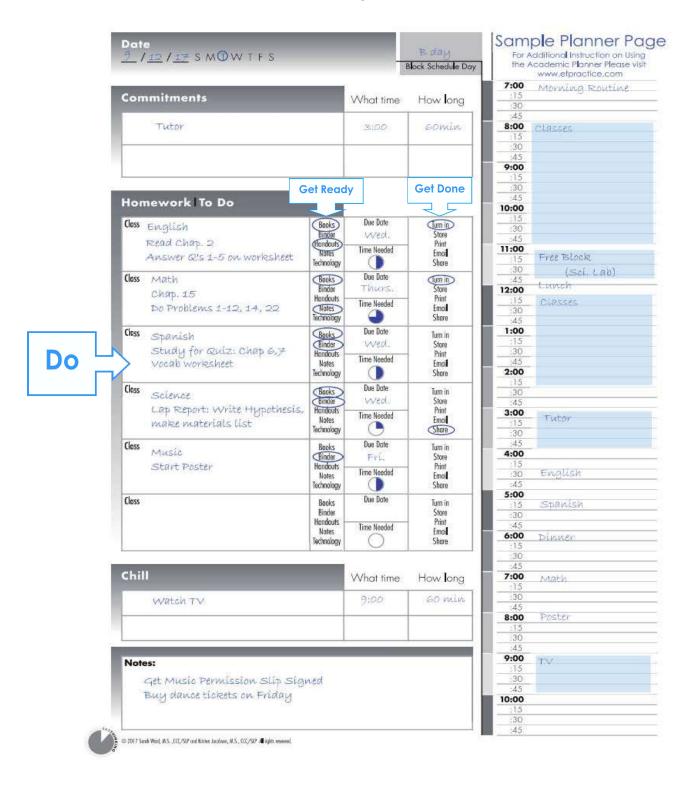
To Learn More

www.efpractice.com
Ward, S. & Jacobsen, K. (2014, August). Staying a beat ahead. *Attention Magazine,* 12-15.
Ward, S. & Jacobsen, K. (2014). A clinical model for developing executive function skills.
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The 360 Thinking Academic Planner

Date
9 / 12 / 17 S M Ⓣ W T F S

B day
Block Schedule Day

Sample Planner Page
For Additional Instruction on Using the Academic Planner Please visit www.efpractice.com

Commitments	What time	How long
Tutor	3:00	60min

Get Ready

Get Done

Do

Homework | To Do

Class			Due Date	Time Needed		
English	Read Chap. 2 Answer Q's 1-5 on worksheet	Books Binder Handouts Notes Technology	Wed.	◑	Turn in Store Print Email Share
Math	Chap. 15 Do Problems 1-12, 14, 22	Books Binder Handouts Notes Technology	Thurs.	◕	Turn in Store Print Email Share
Spanish	Study for Quiz: Chap 6,7 Vocab worksheet	Books Binder Handouts Notes Technology	Wed.	◑	Turn in Store Print Email Share
Science	Lap Report: Write Hypothesis, make materials list	Books Binder Handouts Notes Technology	Wed.	◔	Turn in Store Print Email Share
Music	Start Poster	Books Binder Handouts Notes Technology	Fri.	◑	Turn in Store Print Email Share
		Books Binder Handouts Notes Technology		○	Turn in Store Print Email Share

Chill	What time	How long
Watch TV	9:00	60 min

Notes:
Get Music Permission Slip Signed
Buy dance tickets on Friday

Time	
7:00 :15 :30 :45	Morning Routine
8:00 :15 :30 :45	Classes
9:00 :15 :30 :45	
10:00 :15 :30 :45	
11:00 :15 :30 :45	Free Block (Sci. Lab)
12:00 :15 :30 :45	Lunch Classes
1:00 :15 :30 :45	
2:00 :15 :30 :45	
3:00 :15 :30 :45	Tutor
4:00 :15 :30 :45	English
5:00 :15 :30 :45	Spanish
6:00 :15 :30 :45	Dinner
7:00 :15 :30 :45	Math
8:00 :15 :30 :45	Poster
9:00 :15 :30 :45	TV
10:00 :15 :30 :45	

Our 360 Thinking Academic Planner was designed as a tool to support students in making time visible and reflects the Get Ready * Do * Done (Get Done) program.