

PRACTICING STUDENT EMPOWERMENT

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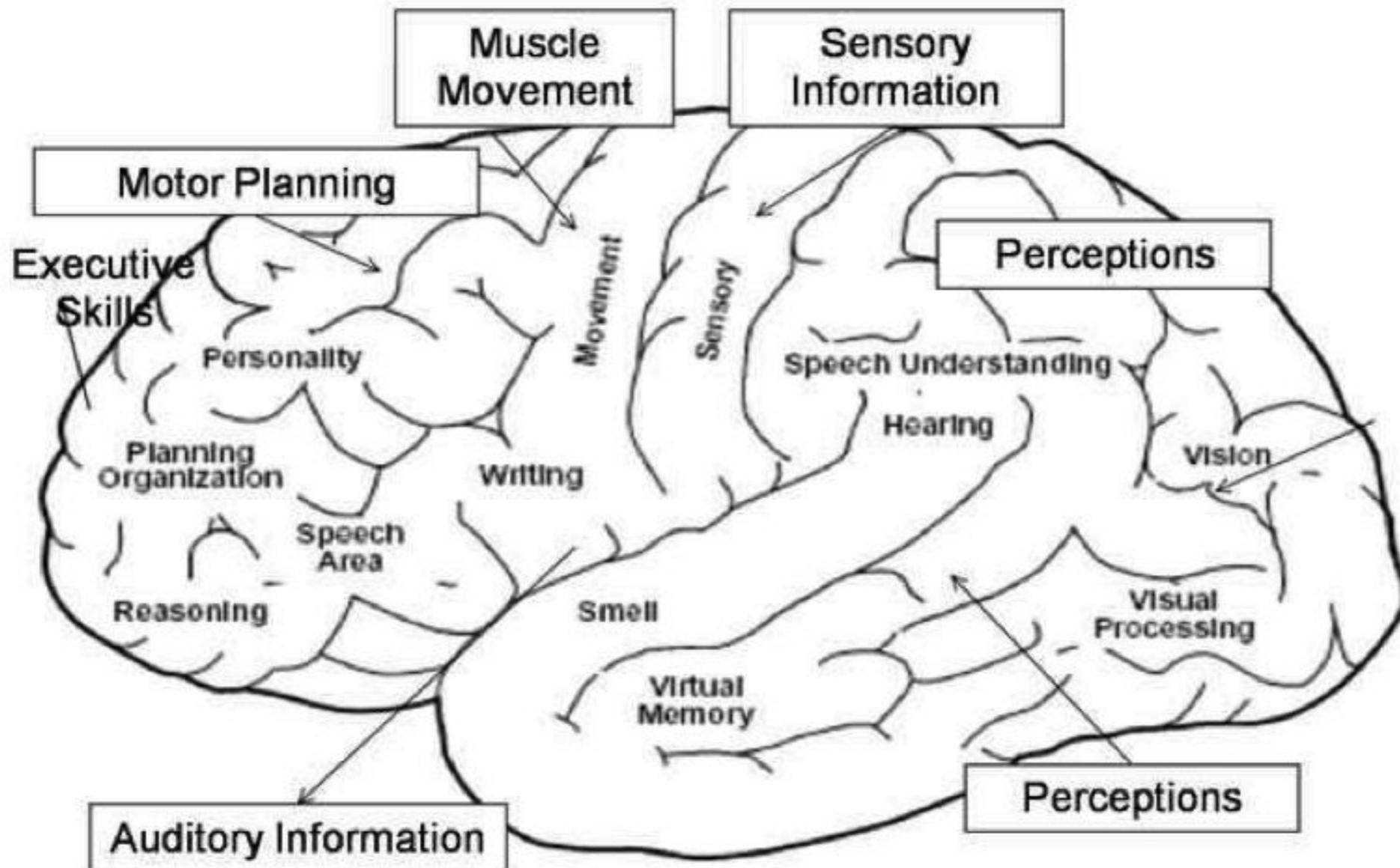


OVERVIEW OF TODAY'S PRESENTATION

- Overview of EF, and underpinnings that are relevant to parents, students, and staff that support student independence; note that interventions and strategies will be broadly referenced
- Review and discussion of parent questions relating to EF
- Emphasis on useable, real-life examples, and practical information for families
- **For starters, an important request and disclosure**
- For those who want to extend the conversation, we offer parents a free consultation to review services we offer, including EF Coaching
- All resources are available online at www.iepguardians.org under *Presentations*

EXECUTIVE SKILLS: OVERVIEW

Executive Skills and the Brain



DOMAINS OF EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING

Executive Functioning Domains (in order of skill/brain development)

- **Inhibition**: the ability to stop a target behavior at the appropriate time
- **Working Memory**: the capacity to hold info in suspension for the purpose of completing a task
- **Emotional Control**: modulation of emotional responses by bringing rational thought and coping strategies to the situation
- **Shift**: moving from one activity to another and adapting to various classroom demands in a reasonable time
- **Self-monitoring**: self-examination and active monitoring of student's own progress
- **Initiation**: the ability to begin a task independently; generating ideas, responses, problem solving strategies
- **Planning/Organization**: the ability to manage current and future demands
- **Organization of Materials**: imposing order on school materials and storage spaces
- **Self-Awareness**: assisting a student with an accurate and functional picture of her strengths and needs as a student with a disability

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SELF DIRECTED BEHAVIORS

AXIS I: REPERTOIRE



Emerging Self Advocacy Behaviors

Limited insight into how strengths and challenges lead to functional limitation

Consistently underestimates demands; Budgets time disproportionately

Highly dependent on external third parties to assert rights; Has little knowledge of what supports exist in environment

Prompt dependent on communication with relevant parties; requires scripting and modeling; uses wrong medium for purpose

Lacks initiative or ownership in problem solving

Self-directed Behaviors

Self-Awareness of strengths and needs

Awareness of academic/task demands

Knowledge of rights and supports

Communication

Leadership

Advanced Self Advocacy Behaviors

Knows what situations require more or less application of strategies

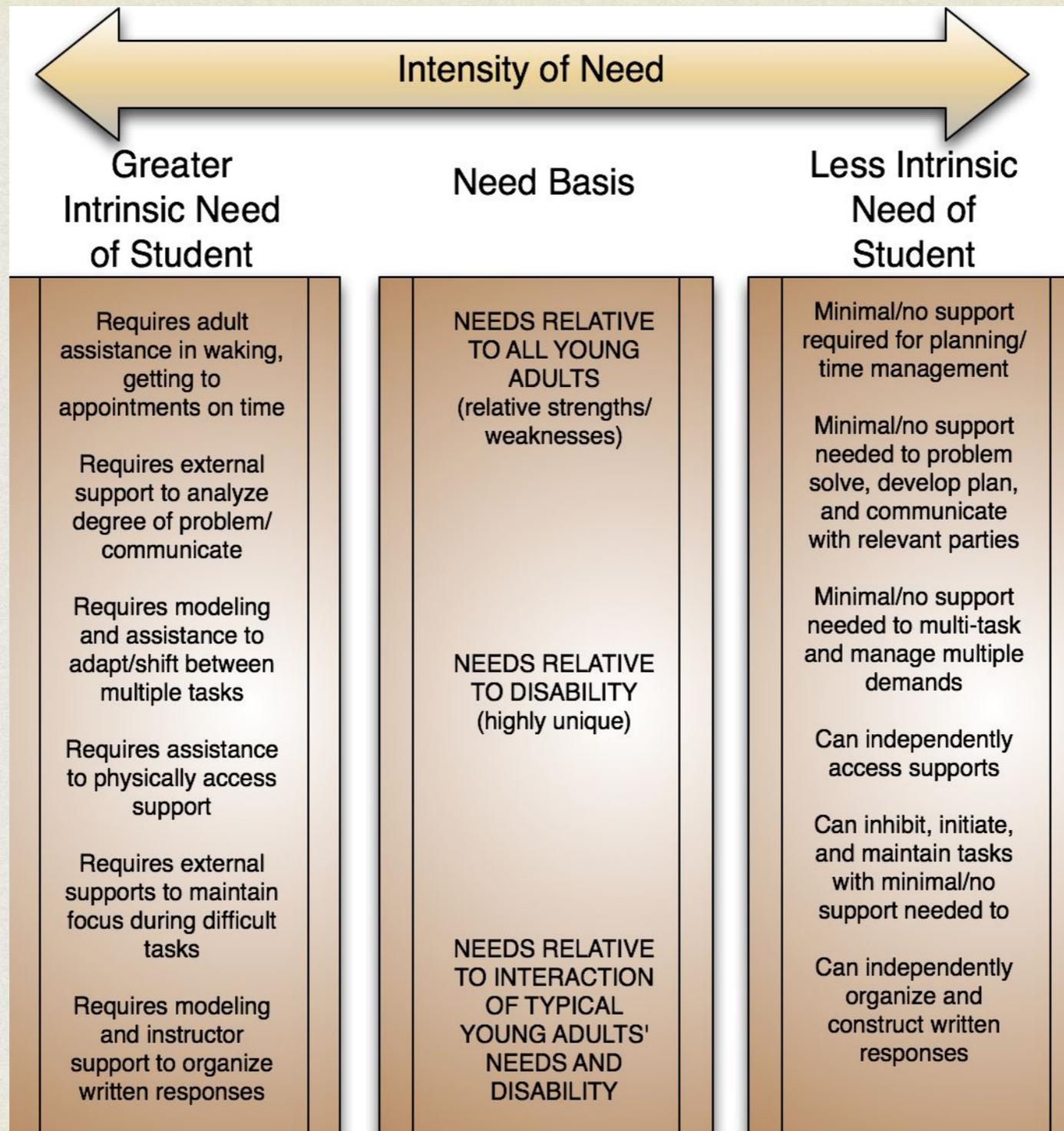
Evaluates demands across settings and instructors; adjusts output accordingly

Understands limitations of rights; seeks clarity in the "grey areas"

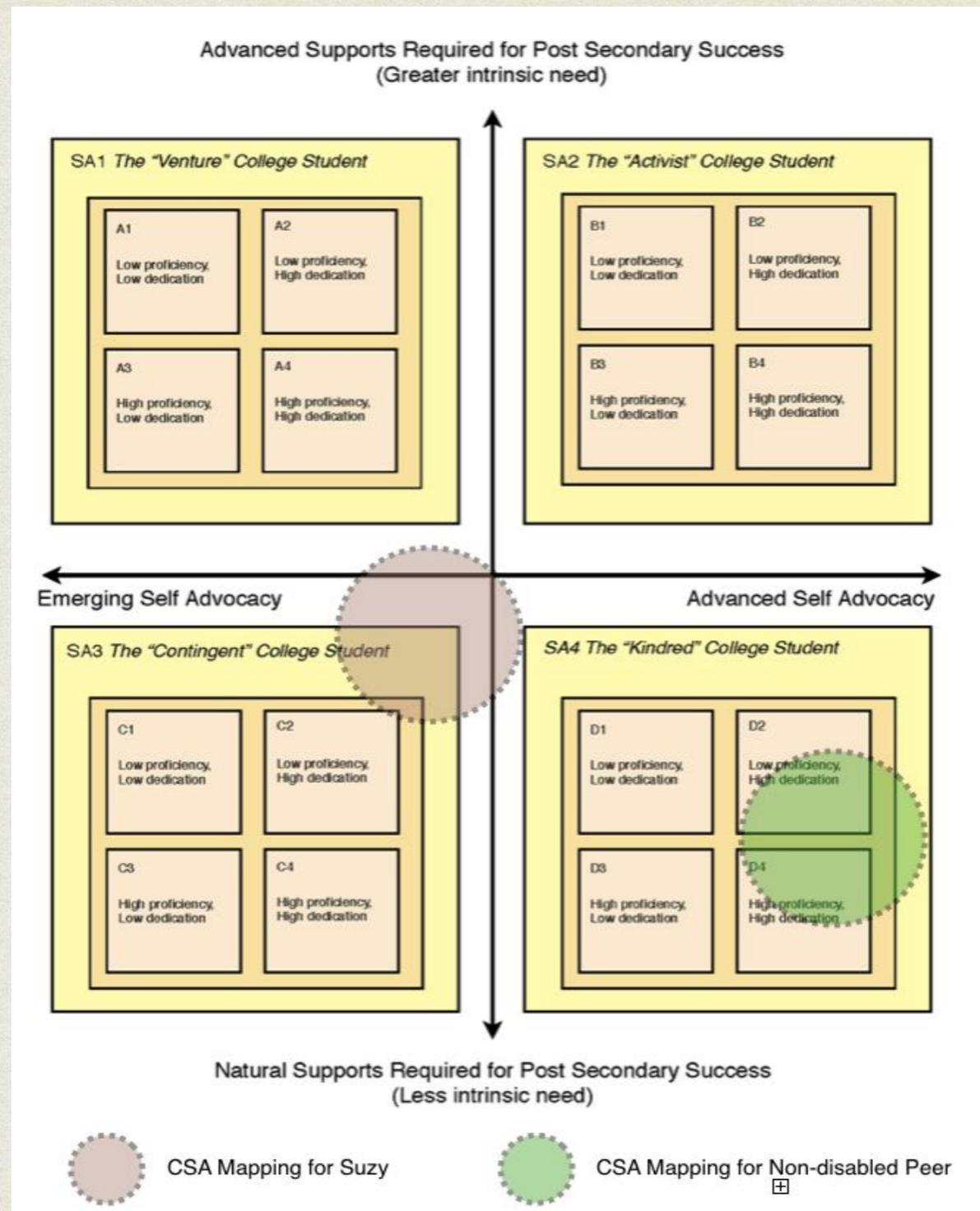
Knows why, how, when, and who to contact for clarification

Stands up for the rights of others, encourages action

SELF DIRECTED BEHAVIORS AXIS II: NEED



SUPPORT MATRIX: A TOOL FOR INTERVENTION



OUTCOMES IN EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING: HOW WE TARGET THE NEXT SETTING



- The diminishing frequency and intensity of parent, school, or third-party based interventions
- The increased application of self-advocacy skills and self-directed behaviors, in a variety of settings
- The extent to which current supports the student benefits from receives in current setting are available/accessible in the next setting
- Is it meaningful to the student?
- Is it sustainable?

EXECUTIVE SKILLS: OVERVIEW

- Many parts of the brain impacted by executive functioning, but primarily involves frontal lobe (prefrontal cortex) functions that facilitate/impact “novel problem solving”
- Process or integrated processes that link present and past actions
- The prefrontal cortex is the brain’s “CEO” which makes judgements and delegates action
- EF is rarely “broken”, but inefficiencies exist for many individuals
- Qualitative/rating scales assessments across several settings/reporter is critical (Conners, CPT, Tower of London, Rey-Ostreith WCST, TOVA, TMT, BRIEF)
- Understanding a student’s relative strengths and weaknesses is critical to any plan

EXECUTIVE SKILLS: OVERVIEW

Students with EF difficulties demonstrate the following difficulties in school, home, workplace, and community:

- Planning activities
- Effectively managing time: knowing when to start and when to stop
- Monitoring multiple tasks simultaneously
- Application of previously mastered knowledge
- Changing pace, focus, or subject
- Accurately assessing when help is needed
- Holding back on impulses
- Accurately estimating how much time would be required for a task
- Memorizing and retrieving information
- Developing a plan of action or response to a conflict or problem

ACADEMIC DIFFICULTIES: FUNCTIONAL PERFORMANCE

Problems resulting from inefficient executive skills

- Procrastination and inefficient use of planning opportunities
- Difficulty in adhesion of disparate concepts in writing
- Easily diverted from task by stimuli
- Slow completion of tasks
- Poor modulation of emotional responses
- Impairments with social judgement
- Ineffective model of self-monitoring
- Difficulties in moving from one task to another



SOME OBSERVATIONS ON EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING



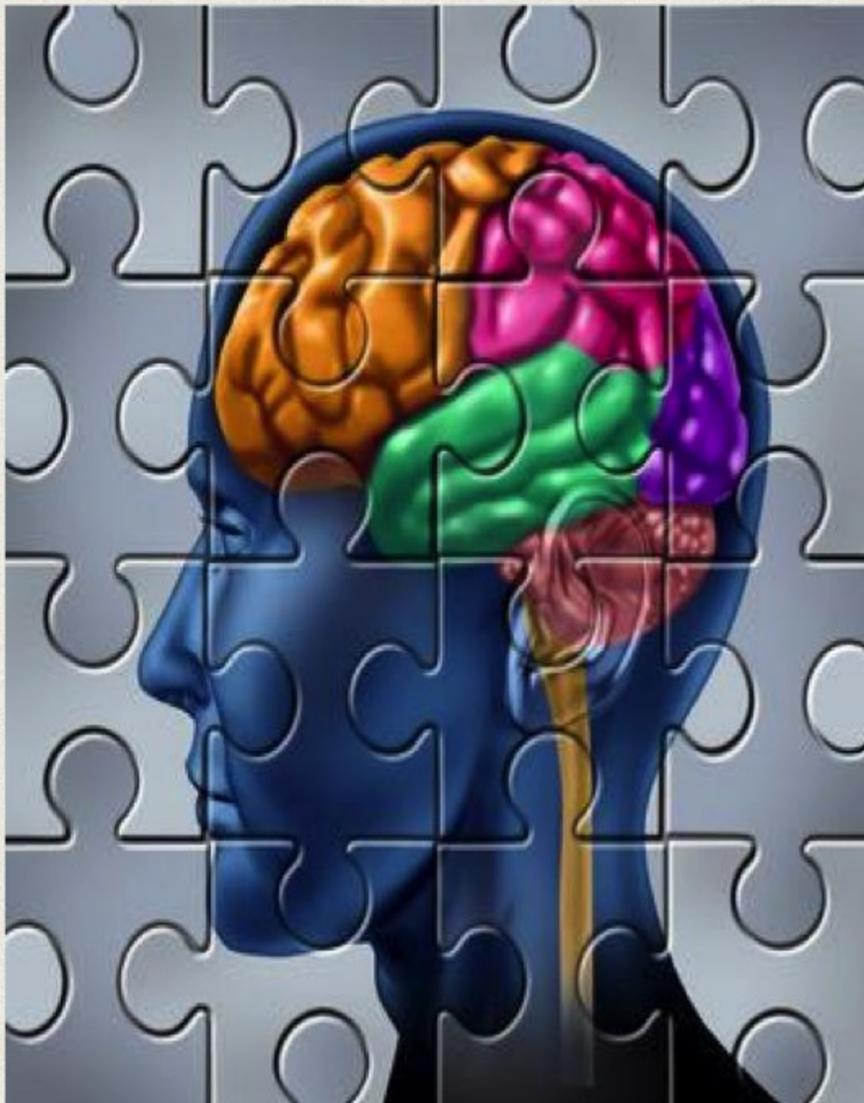
- Research shows that, neurotypically, EF skills take 25 years to fully develop, with biggest gap around middle school years
- Verbal ability strongly linked to typical EF development
- Brain development: from back to front
- Skill development tends to be progressive, with the last and most complex skill development time management and metacognition (learning how to learn)
- EF skill development predicated on fading external cues, and teaching internal, self-directed cues & strategies
- Vast divide between our (adult's) expectations and capability of children and executive skills difficulties
- Two basic approaches: impose instruction or teach the child compensatory strategies
- WE MUST INTERVENE WHERE CHILD IS, DEVELOPMENTALLY, NOT WHERE WE DESIRE THEM TO BE

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING

- Developmentally appropriate need to distance support and reliance on parents: middle school years see a point of diminishing returns for parent based intervention
- EF coaching ultimately informs an understanding of a student's ideal level of independence
- Strengthened ability to anticipate the next environment, and effectively generalize the skill to that environment
- EF coaching must be **HIGHLY INDIVIDUALIZED**
- Force maximizing EF instruction through partnership with parents, teachers, and therapists



SOME OBSERVATIONS ON EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING



- The process “requires wrinkles, but hopefully reveals no tears...”
- Assessment and reliance on self-report
- Students who protect coping strategies (efficient and inefficient alike) that have sustained them in the past
- Avoiding superimposing schemas that work for us on kids
- Understanding that EF needs globally impact functioning, not just academics
- Post secondary success: “the least destructive assumption”
- Our Mantra: PLAN-EXECUTE-REPAIR
- Identifying the gray areas, and willingness to delve in and clarify

EF Coaching: How Does Our Model Work?

- Highly relationship-based
- Executive Function Intervention Plan (EFIP): Development of at least three goals (ie, parent, student, coach)
- Exercises vs. Strategies
- Min: Weekly, 1 hour sessions for minimum of 3 months
- Instructional component as needed (ex: SIM, Learning Strategies, rehabilitative exercises)
- Summer: great for skill instruction, but less to organize (best to teach while demands are authentic and support is meaningful)
- Distance and commuting are critical (online coaching is sometimes an option once relationship is built)
- Data driven
- Ideally addresses both skill development and management of workload
- Maintenance: case management

A TYPICAL W&A EF LESSON

[Client Name]
[Date]
Executive Functioning Skills
Coaching Session

<i>Evaluate</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Evaluate goals from the week.
<i>Forecast</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Examine needs, routines, or tasks that need to be addressed (e.g. list from assignment notebook).
<i>Prioritize</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Prioritize current initiatives to meet goals (e.g. prioritize that list by placing a number of importance next to each).
<i>Budget</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● By order of importance, input assignments or tasks on calendar or planner, with the allotted time budgeted/estimated for each task. (Have client also track actual time.)
<i>Initiate</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Summarize action items; have client verbally review steps.
<i>Evaluate</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Looking ahead, discuss how will assess successful achievement of the next week's goals.

EF Coaching: How Does Our Model Work?

EFIP

- Sessions 1-2: Intake and Relationship Building
- Session 3: Goal Setting and Prioritization
- Sessions 4-8: Instructional support for goals
- Sessions 9-10: Assessment/Evaluation

YOUR QUESTIONS

1. Will our kids outgrow EF deficits? -at 20, 30, 40, 50... 80 year old?
2. How can we help the student if he/she cannot outgrow his EF deficits? (at home and at school)
3. How much should we help them if, on the other hand we want them to become independent?
4. How is EF related to motivation?
5. When does EF usually really show up as an issue in our child's life?
6. What other issues do kids with EF usually have?
7. Can a child who struggles with EF go off to college? how would that be done?
 - a. www.thinkcollege.net
8. How can technology support be used as a resource for those with EF skill deficits?
9. How much are teachers trained to identify EF deficits?
10. How is the school going to provide personalized monitoring for a student that does not have an aide but cannot take care of HW independently? What other plans exist?
11. What do you do when you hear an adult (perhaps a teacher) claim your child is just lazy?

EF Resources

- www.iepguardians.org

- www.iepguardians.org/STUFF/W&A%20Brochure_EF%20v3.0.pdf
- www.smartbutscatteredkids.com
- www.efintheclassroom.net
- www.efs2therescue.ca
- www.developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/executive-function/
- www.learningworksforkids.com
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- <http://www.gvlibraries.org/common-core-learning-standards/7-m4a-your-brain-plugged>
- www.toolsofthemind.com
- www.gonoodle.com
- www.brainfacts.org
- www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/teenbrain/



IN CLOSING...