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THE

# Strengthening Executive Function

WORKBOOK

for

Planning, Time Management, and Emotional Regulation

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# Introduction

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Dear Colleague,

I hope you enjoy using these materials and find them effective in supporting your students.

To better understand what executive function is, and to learn some of the best practices for supporting students with executive function impairments, please refer to the first episode of my podcast, [The Exceptional Educator](#). In this episode, I interview master teacher and educational therapist, Pamm Scribner, about:

- the difference between executive function and ADHD
- what a successful executive function intervention looks like, and
- when medication or alternative therapies can be helpful.

You may also want to explore the [ADHD and EF](#) Pinterest board I've created, which includes terrific resources for supporting students with weaker executive function.

This workbook includes three activities to support children's development of stronger executive function:

**Activity 1** - Homework: Creating A Daily Plan

**Activity 2** - Emotions: Finding Solutions

**Activity 3** - Tests: Planning For Success

If you find these materials helpful, please come back to [BayTreeBlog.com](#) for more. You can stay tuned by subscribing to [receive email updates](#) when new articles and materials are published, and following me on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

Warmly,



# Homework: Creating A Daily Plan

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## 1. How to motivate the student.

Ask your student why creating a homework plan will help them. How will completing their homework help them achieve goals that are personally relevant?

## 2. How to use the planner.

- Write down all assignments.
- Make sure the student has all of the materials.
- Make time estimates for each task. Once the task is done, compare the actual time to the estimated time.

## 3. What else can the instructor do?

- Some students will prefer dictating the plan to the instructor.
- Cue the student to begin filling out the planner.
- Praise the student with specific, immediate feedback: *"Nice job transitioning from one assignment to another!"*
- Sit with the student, as necessary.
- Remind the students to take breaks, as necessary.

HERE'S AN EXAMPLE:

	Assignment	Materials	Estimated Time	Actual Time	Done?
1	Multiplication worksheet	Worksheet Crayons Pencil	10 minutes	7 minutes	X
2	Reading for class	"Smile"	15 minutes	10 minutes	X
3	Spelling homework	Worksheet Pencil Personal dictionary	10 minutes	10 minutes	X

# Homework: Creating A Daily Plan

## Homework Planner

	Assignment	Materials	Estimated Time	Actual Time	Done?
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					



I didn't eat the homework!

# Emotions: Finding Solutions

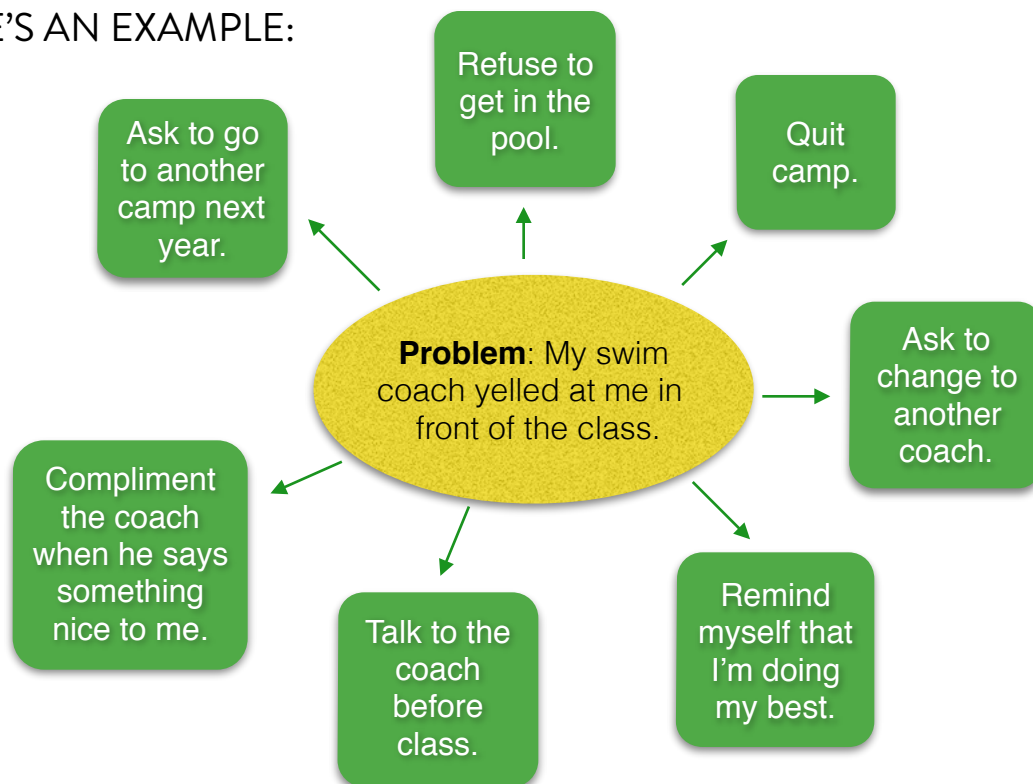
**How can I help help frustrated or angry students?** Sometimes students will come to a session angry, sad, or frustrated. This strategy works best for students with whom you've already developed rapport.

If the student is *extremely* upset, bypass this strategy. I recommend using the approach outlined in [The Whole Brain Child](#) by Daniel Siegel and Tina Bryson.

**Create a solutions web to help the student identify the problem and several possible solutions:**

- Place the problem in the center of the web. Some student will prefer dictating the plan to the instructor.
- See if you can coach the student to be specific and descriptive. For example, "My swimming coach told me to swim faster, even though I was swimming as fast as I could," instead of, "My swim coach is mean to me."
- Work with the student to identify options to solve or manage the problem. Brainstorm widely.
- Chose the option that seems the most effective.

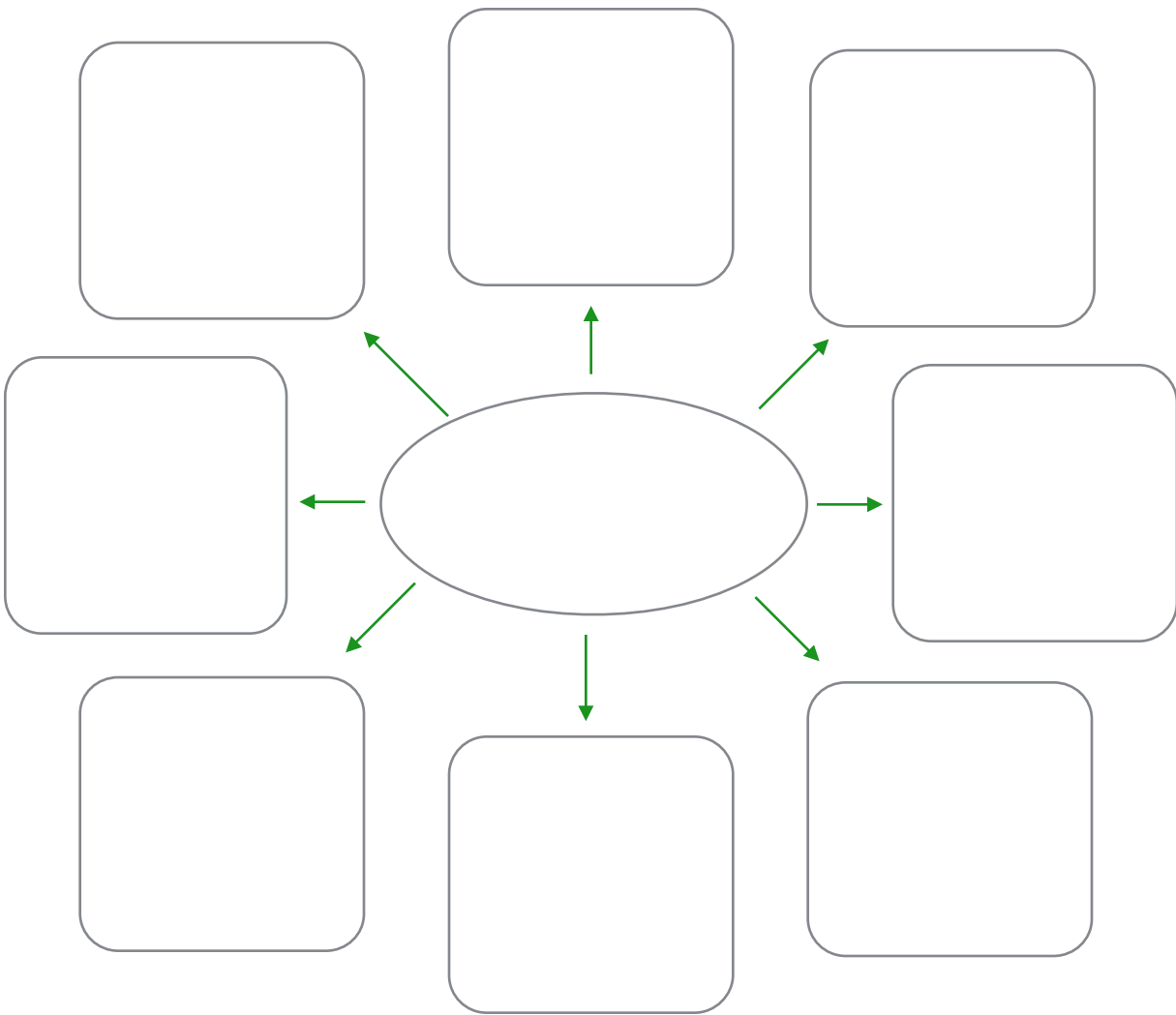
HERE'S AN EXAMPLE:



# Emotions: Finding Solutions

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## Solutions Web



# Tests: Planning For Success

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## **1. How to help students prepare for a test.**

Many students have grand ambitions for acing tests, and yet, they don't know how to plan, initiate studying, or monitor their progress to earn the grades they want.

Many of these kids need explicit instruction in *how* to study. Their perfunctory studying keeps them from performing as well as they'd like. They lose confidence. And worst of all, they stop trying.

## **2. Teach the skill necessary to prepare for an exam.**

Fill in any gaps in their knowledge of effective study skills.

- a. Help the student set an attainable goal. Research has shown student goal setting increases motivation.
- b. Teach your student how to use each of the strategies below.
- c. Help the student identify which strategies work best for them.

## **3. Fill out the Tracking Chart with the student**

- a. Help the student create a study plan.
- b. Many students will also need an adult or external cue (alarm, e-mail, text message) to *start* studying. Ask the student how they'll remember to start studying.
- c. Fill out the Tracking Chart with the student.

## **4. After the test is completed:**

Help the student analyze what worked well and whether or not there are aspects of their study preparation they can improve upon for next time.



# Tests: Planning For Success

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## Backwards Planning for Study Strategies

Goal Setting and Evaluation

My performance goal for the test: \_\_\_\_\_

What I actually earned on the test: \_\_\_\_\_

### Menu of Study Strategies

*Here are eight of the best ways to study. Choose which strategies you'll use.*

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. Take practice test

\_\_\_\_\_ 5. Create a "cheat sheet"

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Outline text

\_\_\_\_\_ 6. Study flash cards

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. Use study guide

\_\_\_\_\_ 7. Quiz myself

\_\_\_\_\_ 4. Make diagrams

\_\_\_\_\_ 8. Have someone quiz me

### Post-Test Evaluation

*How did your studying pay off? Answer the following questions with your instructor:*

1. What strategies worked the best?
2. Did you use any strategies that weren't helpful?
3. Did you spend enough time studying? *(circle one)*

**Yes**

**No**

What will you do similarly or differently next time you study for a test?

# Tests: Planning For Success

## Backwards Planning for Study Strategies

### Tracking Chart

Day of week: <i>Tuesday</i>	Day of week:	Day of week:	Day of week:	Day of week:	Day of week:
Date: <i>3/14/2014</i>	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:
<b>What study strategies will I use today?</b>  1. <i>Outline text</i> 2. <i>use study guide</i> 3. <i>Quiz myself</i>	What study strategies will I use today?  1. 2. 3.	What study strategies will I use today?  1. 2. 3.	What study strategies will I use today?  1. 2. 3.	What study strategies will I use today?  1. 2. 3.	What study strategies will I use today?  1. 2. 3.
<b>How long will each strategy take?</b>  1. <i>30 minutes</i> 2. <i>15 minutes</i> 3. <i>10 minutes</i>	How long will each strategy take?  1. 2. 3.	How long will each strategy take?  1. 2. 3.	How long will each strategy take?  1. 2. 3.	How long will each strategy take?  1. 2. 3.	How long will each strategy take?  1. 2. 3.
<b>How long did each strategy actually take?</b>  1. <i>40 minutes</i> 2. <i>10 minutes</i> 3. <i>10 minutes</i>	How long did each strategy actually take?  1. 2. 3.	How long did each strategy actually take?  1. 2. 3.	How long did each strategy actually take?  1. 2. 3.	How long did each strategy actually take?  1. 2. 3.	How long did each strategy actually take?  1. 2. 3.