

## The Basics

- Consistent bedtime: many parents feel that their children have neurological attention issues; however, many children often just have poor sleeping habits which contributes to poor attending at home and at school
- No television in bedroom: a TV at night will keep the watcher awake! The light of the TV tricks your body into thinking that it's time to get up and play.
- Eat balanced meals: this is a no-brainer but nutritious meals help us to think well. Glucose and protein from our food give our brains the energy they need to operate
- Planned homework time: building routines is ESSENTIAL for children. Children benefit from structure and this structure helps them to build habits. Unfortunately, children need our help with instilling good habits
- Quality time with kids: this goes without saying...just spend time with them and tell them that you love them. Remember- if a child has poor executive functions, it does not mean they are lazy! Their brain is just not being the best "manager". You can help!

## Time Management Strategies

- Calendar
  - Wall calendar with color coded post-its
  - Visual Timer
  - Apps
  - Amazon (buy used!)
  - Post-its/Nonverbal reminders
- Picture/Written schedule
- When providing verbal cues, use a simple and neutral tone
- To-do lists
- Schedule homework and chores for directly after school
- Use first/then or sequencing directives
  - First: do homework, Then: have snack
  - First, do homework; second have a snack; third, do chores
  - Color code books/folders/notebooks to increase efficiency
- Have child prepare materials night before school

## Organization

- Alarm clock/visual timer
- Checklist of assignments & materials
- Color-code notebooks/folders
- Separate folders for homework/return to school items
- Storage bins with labels
- Create a homework space for the child
- Reward child for having good organization abilities
- Bag for binder (see Resources)
- Portfolio
- Cereal boxes (see Resources)

### Task Initiation

- \* Visual Timer / Set time limits
- \* Post-its can serve as nonverbal cues to avoid possible altercation
- \* Use of positive reinforcement
  - \* Monetary
  - \* Non-monetary
  - \* Frequently check with child to see if he/her started work; provide nonverbal cues when possible
- \* Break work into chunks (lessen stress)
- \* Establish a routine
- \* Give short breaks
- \* Provide a checklist; if necessary, prompt the child before each step is to be completed

### Planning

- \* For reading: Before opening a book, ask the child to tell you what he/she feels the book will be about
- \* Ask the child to estimate how long a task might take; compare the actual time to the estimated time
- \* Prioritize tasks ("Have to", "Want to", "Choose to")
- \* Use of smart phone, iPad, or tablet to record important activities

### Attention

- \* Develop a nonverbal cue when you need the child to pay better attention
- \* Use a soft, neutral tone of voice when giving directions
- \* Allow breaks during homework/chores
- \* Exercise; research shows that exercise before academic tasks increases attention and ability to recall information better
- \* Stability ball- allow child to sit on the ball while working

### Resources

- \* <http://info.nspt4kids.com/executive-functioning/>
- \* <http://cognitiveconnectionstherapy.com/Resources/Games.aspx>
- \* <http://educationalappsforall.wordpress.com/category/executive-functioning-apps/>
- \* Pinterest.com
- \* *Smart but Scattered* by Peg Dawson and Richard Guare
- \* *Get Organized without Losing It* by Janet S. Fox (written for ages 8-13)
- \* *Late, Lost, and Unprepared: A Parent's Guide to Helping Children with Executive Functioning* by Joyce Cooper-Kahn & Laurie Dietzel
- \* Bag for Binder: <http://www.pinterest.com/pin/534872893215000257/>
- \* Cereal Box Organizers:

<http://www.pinterest.com/pin/72128031505223663/>

\* Highlighter Tape:

[http://www.amazon.com/Removable-Highlighter-Tape-Roll-Colors/dp/B00872WZMO/ref=sr\\_1\\_5?s=office-products&ie=UTF8&qid=1386952164&sr=1-5](http://www.amazon.com/Removable-Highlighter-Tape-Roll-Colors/dp/B00872WZMO/ref=sr_1_5?s=office-products&ie=UTF8&qid=1386952164&sr=1-5)

## WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

There are a number of things parents can do to help students actually turn in homework:

1. *Show them how to organize their homework.* One day, your child might graduate to color-coded folders, but in the beginning, **simple is best**. I recommend one folder for all completed homework. One place to put homework, one place to find it. What could be easier?
2. *Help them figure out a routine that they can use for each class.* Each teacher has different class procedures; some want homework at the beginning of class, some at the end; some have a homework basket, others want homework passed to the front. While this might not seem like a big deal to you, it can be overwhelming for a 14 year-old. Find out if your child can turn in homework the same way for each class. For example, can he hand in homework at the beginning of the class- even if that isn't the teacher's regular procedure?
3. *Tell them to turn it in whenever they remember (or find it).* Often, a student will realize that they forgot to turn in their homework a few minutes or hours after it was due, but they hold on to it. Explain that a little late is better than not at all.
4. *Find out from the teacher if homework is graded.* Yes, we want our children to be responsible, but we also have to pick our battles. If the homework isn't graded, doesn't count, the teacher doesn't look at it- why cause World War III if it's not turned in?
5. *Let them suffer the consequences.* This is the hardest one of all, isn't it? We don't want our babies to suffer- to miss recess! We don't want to see an *Incomplete* or an *D* on a report card, do we? But, sometimes that's what needs to happen for our children to realize that, "Oh, wow! Maybe I should turn in my homework!" If you keep saving them, they won't ever do it for themselves.

Angela Norton Tyler is the author of the book *Tutor Your Child to Reading Success*. She is also an educator, business owner and speaker-trainer. This mother of two wears many hats, but the common thread running through them all: empowering parents. Please visit <http://www.family-homework-answers.com/homework-manifesto.html> today to find out how Angela can help empower you and your family.