



Smart but Scattered: Improving Executive Skills to Promote School Success

Presented by

Peg Dawson, Ed.D.

Objectives: Participants will be able to describe:

- brain processes involved in executive skill development both in typically developing children and those with executive dysfunction
- how executive skills impact school performance and daily living
- key strategies for improving executive skills in students, including 1) how to make environmental modifications to support weak executive skills, 2)

- how to design protocols for teaching executive skills, and 3) how to use incentives effectively to encourage students to engage in the practice necessary for improving executive skills
- critical features of a coaching method geared to improving school performance through supporting executive skill development

12 hours

Overview of Executive Skills (ES)

- Definitions
- Underlying Theory

Assessment of Executive Skills (ES)

- Parent/Teacher/Student Interviews
- Behavior Rating Scales
- Formal/Informal Assessment

ES in the Context of Special Education/RTI

- Strength/Weakness Profile Versus Disability
- 504 Accommodations Versus Special Education
- Promoting ES Development within an RTI Framework

Introduction to Interventions

- Executive Skill Profiles in Adults
- How understanding our own executive skills profiles can improve how we work with others to improve their executive skills weaknesses

Intervention 1: Modifying the Environment

- Changing the Physical or Social Environment
- Modifying Tasks
- Changing the Way Adults Interact with Students

Intervention 2: Teaching Executive Skills

- Bedroom Cleaning

- Teaching Students How to Pay Attention
- Teaching Students to Make Homework Plans
- Teaching Students an Organizational System
- Teaching Students to Control Emotions

Intervention 3: Using Incentives to Encourage Practice

- The benefits of using incentives or rewards
- Simple incentives
- Elaborate incentives (specific examples provided)

Whole Classroom Adaptations for All 3 Intervention Strategies

- Incorporating all 3 strategies into whole-class routines
- Seminars for middle or high school

Coaching - Part I

- Theoretical underpinnings of coaching
- Coaching job description
- Fundamentals of Coaching for Academic Success
- Coaching Students to Promote Positive Social Interactions

Coaching—Part II

- Group Coaching and other coaching adaptations
- Coaching Examples

Peg Dawson, Ed.D.

Peg Dawson, Ed.D, received her doctorate in School/Child Clinical Psychology from the University of Virginia. She worked as a school psychologist for 16 years in Maine and New Hampshire, and for the past 24 years has worked at the Center for Learning and Attention Disorders in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, where she specializes in the assessment of children and adults with learning and attention disorders.

Along with her colleague, Dr. Richard Guare, she has authored several books, including a book for professionals, *Executive Skills in Children and*

Adolescents: A Practical Guide to Assessment and Intervention (recently revised) as well as a book for parents, *Smart but Scattered*. Their most recent books are *Coaching Students with Executive Skills Deficits* and *Smart but Scattered Teens*.

Dr. Dawson is a past president of both the National Association of School Psychologists and the International School Psychology Association. She is also the 2006 recipient of NASP's Lifetime Achievement Award and a 2010 recipient of the International School Psychology Association Distinguished Services Award.

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