The executive function skills are a set of thinking skills that individuals develop in the prefrontal cortex from birth until at least 30 years of age. These skills reflect an individual’s ability to regulate attention, working memory, emotions and problem solving in order to persist in reaching a planned goal. The planning, self-monitoring and editing of plans to achieve goals rely on an individual’s ability to recall previous times similar goals were achieved, as well as to use forethought to anticipate the process and end result of achieving new goals. An individual’s ability to carryout a plan over a long period of time when there are interruptions and other activities requires the use of a daily planner. However, tasks and steps of tasks that require an individual’s sustained attention until completion are best managed with an analog clock. The analog clock provides a visual-spatial reference to mark the temporal points for initiating and completing a task, as well as the visual “sweep” of time that guides an individual’s pace. The use of a timer provides a stopping point during tasks when an individual monitors pace, presence of distractions and use of strategies to complete tasks. The combined use of the time tracking tools allows an individual to develop a stronger regulation of their executive function skills, thus learn to function more independently.
The Time Tracker Program

The Tools to Track Time

**TRACKNETS:**
Individual magnets with prompts for tracking start, check and stop times for up to 3 different tasks or parts of task in one hour. A Time Robber magnet is included in the Tracknets. Time Robbers refer to any distractions that might be “stealing” one’s time from a task. These distractions may be interruptions, but also internal distractions such as fatigue, hunger, stress, etc.

**My Power Clock:**
A count down timer with easy time buttons that keep sequencing to a minimum. Can be set on music, buzzer or vibrate modes. It is small enough to store in pencil cases in binders.

**The Analog Clock:**
A magnetized analog clock that serves as the tool to plan and self-monitor time to complete tasks

**The Agenda Book:**
A daily planner that provides students with necessary spaces to plan relaxation, activities, appointments, homework and test preparation times across the course of their day.

© Copyright April 2013. Kristen Jacobsen, M.S., CCC/SLP and Sarah Ward, M.S., CCC/SLP. All rights reserved.
The analog clock is the mediator for regulating an individual’s awareness of time to complete the tasks that are scheduled within an hour. My Power Clock also acts as the mediator for monitoring an individual’s pace. It is important that the individual who is learning to track time takes the steps described below with adult question prompts, in order for these tools to considered mediators and achieve stronger executive function skills. This is especially true as in this age of technology students are surrounded by digital time which does not show the sweep of time.

**Step 1. Get Ready**

Set the analog clock at the individual’s workspace in a PLAN SPACE where it can be easily monitored.

Place the GET READY SMARTS magnet at the current minute hand to mark the start of the planning time.
Step 2. Create Time Markers:

Place the DO Magnet to mark the beginning point of a task on the clock. This allows an individual to maintain a visual reference point as time passes. The 1, 2 and 3 Magnets can be placed when parts of a task or different tasks will be started within the hour.

For example, Part 1 of an assignment requires the student to Read and Part 2 is to answer some comprehension questions.

Step 3. Identify When to Stop

Slide the DONE magnet around the clock to the identified/estimated time on the clock to stop doing the task.
The Time Tracker Program

How to Improve Time Awareness

Step 4. Create a Checkpoint

Slide the Yellow SMARTs Magnet on the clock to mark the 1/2 way checkpoint of the first part of the task.

Step 5. Know how to R/R

Place the R/R magnet after the Done Tracknet on the clock. Have the student imagine the “R and R” action that they will do after they are done with their assignment or task. For example, will they “Return” their assignment to a teacher and “Relax” for a minute before moving on to the next task? They choose the future picture of themselves after a task is completed. Adults can provide support around selecting an “R” action that is appropriate for the context. Check out our examples of “R’s” on the next page!

Step 6. Hide the Time Robber

Place the Time Robber magnet on the side of the clock beneath the ½ way check in. This reminds students to think ahead about minimizing actions and distractions that will steal their time.

© Copyright April 2013. Kristen Jacobsen, M.S., CCC/SLP and Sarah Ward, M.S., CCC/SLP. All rights reserved.
The Time Tracker Program

How will I LOOK when my task or assignment is Done?

| Reflect | How did your plan work? What would you do the same and what would you do differently next time you have a similar task? |
| Reach out & Review | Review through the assignment with a parent, friend or teacher. Is there a need to Revise? |
| Reset- | The clock will be Reset to plan the next assignment. |
| Record- | Enjoy the reward of checking off your homework is complete or record your stopping place of an assignment so it’s easy to return to when you are done. |
| Restroom break- | Plan your break time! What time do you see yourself coming back to get Restarted? |
| Reschedule | You may not finish your assignment- it’s a long one or maybe you only have a short time. Time to reschedule another time to finish the assignment in your agenda now! |
| Revise | Revise your assignment to more closely match your plan. Decide if you need to replan your time. |
| Return | Return the assignment to your teacher. Where do you see this assignment needing to go so you will have it available to give the teacher in class? |
| Relax- | Take 3 deep breaths and release in order to relax after a task! |
| Rest- | Homework is complete and it’s time to Rest for the night. |
| Relief | Enjoy the Relief that you finished a challenging assignment! |
| Reward yourself | How do you see yourself being rewarded for a job well done? |

© Copyright April 2013. Kristen Jacobsen, M.S., CCC/SLP and Sarah Ward, M.S., CCC/SLP. All rights reserved.
Set the My Power Clock Timer
Set the my power clock timer for the amount of time to the 1/2 way checkpoint.

It is important to convey that the timer is to monitor pace, not measure “how fast” a task can be completed, as this could increase distractibility or impulsivity.

Step 5. Self Monitor Time and Performance

Self-Monitoring Questions:
When the timer is activated cue to student to ask themselves:

“Am I on track with my predicted time?”
“Am I half way done?”
  • Am I still focused on the goal?
  • Has my priority changed?
  • Am I still answering the question?

“Do I have any Time Robbers?”
  • Identify
  • Remove
  • Re-Plan

“Do I need a faster or a slower pace?”
The questions to be answered with the timer include and ought to facilitate a brief discussion with the parent, academic coach, therapist or teacher: The purpose is to increase self-monitoring and use of an external mediator other than a teachers or parent. However, the strategy needs to be used with the support of parents and teachers at first. The addition of an external mediator is more overwhelming if attempting to use it independently.

“Turn off the timer. Did you reach the ½ way checkpoint of your task? If yes, then set the timer for the end of the task.”

“If not, let’s check for any Time Robbers that need to be removed or check your SMARTs to improve task completion.

“Now let’s reset the magnet for a new Stop point and ½ way checkpoint”.

Check your SMARTs

How are my Strategies working? Do I need a new strategy?

Do I need new or different Materials?

Are my Actions achieving the goal?

Should I consult a Resource?
- Parent
- Teacher
- Friend

Technology:
Would a type of technology help? How are my search terms? Am I using the computer wisely?