

SOCIAL COMMUNICATION DISORDERS IN THE CLASSROOM

Tips from The Chatter Program

QUESTION:

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My student never starts their work. They distract others by talking, and they don't do their individual work even though I know they know how. Are they just being lazy? Do I need to move their desk away from the rest of the class?

REFRAME

Executive functioning difficulty can make it difficult for students to start (initiate), sequence, and maintain their attention on a task. I will implement strategies to support my student's executive functioning in the classroom to set them up for success!



EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING

WHAT IS IT?

Executive functioning skills are the higher level cognitive skills that allow us to do things like start tasks, filter out distractions, plan, break down a task into steps, hold information in our working memory, think flexibly, and manage time.

HOW MIGHT THEY LOOK IN THE CLASSROOM?

Students may have difficulty with starting tasks independently, organizing, breaking down tasks into steps, and managing their time during tests and assignments. In social interactions, they may have difficulty with impulse control, and maintaining attention during interactions. You might see students that have a hard time getting their work started independently, even though the academic content is not difficult for them.

HOW CAN I SUPPORT MY STUDENT?

Strategies such as using checklists to break down the steps of a task and supporting instructions with visuals can be helpful. Some students enjoy using visual schedules so that they can see about how long the task will take and what will come after a non-preferred task. When you give instructions, it can help to prompt your student to make a picture of what they have to do in their mind. Providing opportunity for movement and breaks during the day can also help!