Late and Lost, 
but Not Lazy!

With Zipora Schuck
MA/MS

October 24, 2012
Mrs. Schuck is a School Psychologist from Rockland County, NY. She is dedicated to helping children find success during the school day and beyond, through her work with teachers, principals, parents and children. She holds two masters degrees, one in Special Education and one in School Psychology as well as having completed extensive post graduate work in administration.

After working for the NYC Dept. of Education, she assumed the role of Director of the Learning Center at the Beth Rochel School in Monsey, as well as founding Pathways Consulting Services LLC, a professional development agency. She has served as the permanent educational consultant for many schools in Monsey over the last decade, and presents trainings throughout the country. Mrs. Schuck is also an adjunct faculty instructor for Mercy College, teaching in both the undergraduate and graduate programs of Special Education and Psychology.

From all her responsibilities, she most enjoys her counseling and coaching sessions with children and teens, giving them the cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional tools they need to succeed in the real world.
Overview of the Session

Have you ever wondered why some students (and adults as well) seem to have great difficulty organizing their tasks, their time and their things, while others seem to do it effortlessly? The answer may be a varied profile of executive function strengths and weaknesses.

Let’s spend our time together tonight examining some of the executive functions, the role they play in the life of students, and basic intervention strategies.
Session Goals:

• To list executive functions using both the Barkley, and Guare and Dawson models.
• To examine the overlap between LD, ADHD, and weaknesses in executive functioning.
• To discuss the role of a coach
• To learn some practical intervention strategies for the ‘doing’ executive functions
How is the term ‘executive function’ related to schools? Please pick the correct answer.

1. **Executive functions** are meetings that board members and principals attend.

2. Kids that are barely functioning due to disorganization make you want to **execute** them.

3. I don’t know how my school would function without our **executive director**.

4. I tuned in today to find out the answer.
Executive Functions

The cognitive processes that regulates an individual’s ability to execute daily life.
Executive Functions - Barkley (2000)

- The ability to inhibit
- Working memory
- Foresight
- Hindsight
- Organization
- Self-Talk
- Sense of time
- Shifting agendas
- Separating emotion from fact
Executive Functions – Guare and Dawson (2009)

- Response inhibition
- Working memory
- Emotional control
- Sustained attention
- Task initiation
- Planning/prioritizing
- Organization
- Time management
- Goal-directed persistence
- Flexibility
- Metacognition
It’s all in their heads – seriously!

Brain development
- From 13 oz. to 3 lbs.

Growing and pruning
- Gray matter vs. white matter

Ideal stages for modifiability
- Growth spurt prior to adolescence

Frontal Lobe control
- Directs behavior
- Linking past behaviors with current ones
- Helps control emotions
Most individuals have an array of executive skill strengths as well as executive skill weaknesses.

The purpose of identifying weaknesses is to design and implement interventions that address the specific needs.
... but not lazy!

If a child can do a task some of the time, but rarely consistently, this may indicate an executive skill weakness.

If the student has handled the task some of the time, figure out what factors led to his/her success.
Executive Functions, LD, ADHD

Executive Function Weaknesses

LD

ADHD
Executive Functions – Part 1 and Part 2

Part One - Doing
✓ Time planning
✓ Organization
✓ Shift
✓ Self-Talk

Part Two – Thinking
✓ Foresight
✓ Hindsight
✓ Ability to Inhibit
✓ Working Memory
✓ Separating Emotions from Fact
Common Challenges

**Elementary grades**
- Task initiation
- Organization
- The ability to inhibit
- Shift

**Middle School**
- Time management
- Planning/prioritizing
- Organization
- Foresight/hindsight
The student vs. the task

• When you know a student has executive skill weaknesses, pay close attention to their emotional and behavioral responses.
• When a student seems to be avoiding a task, consider the possibility that the child can’t do it.
• Figure out which executive skills a task requires and think about whether the student has those skills.
Assessing needs

- Review the child’s entire daily schedule
- During each time frame/subject/activity list challenges
- Identify what needs to be addresses and who will support the child – classroom teacher, mentor, coach, parent, peer, or the child themselves.
- Decide when and where the support will be given
What is a coach?

- 1830-Oxford University – slang for a tutor who "carries" a student through exams.
- 1831- first sports application – cricket team leader
- 1990 – the term coaching moves out of sports and into the business and psychology models

• A coach supports individuals through a process of achieving a specific and personal result.
• It is a skill based learning experience.
Role of a coach

- Provides a plan and a specific set of directions
- Monitors performance through encouraging self monitoring and questioning
- Provides support and feedback
- Problem solves through challenges
- Determines when mastery is reached and support is no longer needed
- Celebrates accomplishment

• The ideal coach – parent or teacher
Tips for initiating coaching with a student

• Bring up what you will be doing with them (most kids are aware of their challenges)
• Have a calm conversation – don’t strategize during a time of conflict
• Be empathic – this is not about reward and punishment
• Remind the child about the benefits
• Listen to the child
• Stay positive
• Teach and supervise
• Feedback over time

Spend a lot-cry once. spend a little-cry a lot!
Out of the box vs. in the box

- A great school day begins at home
- Plastic crate near front door
- Every night - all morning supplies are placed inside
  - Shoes
  - Coat
  - School bag
  - Snack
  - Lunch
Organizing the book bag

- 2-3 x weekly – on a schedule
- Everything comes out
- Papers are filed or removed
- Systematic repacking
- Questioning throughout
- Scaffold the support
Organizing the desk

• Photo or layout card

• Weekly “making Pesach”

• Spot checks in between

• Only high frequency usage items inside

• Kangaroo pouch on back of chair or shelves in locker
Organizing the binder/books

- Two pocket folder for home filing – recycle or return
- One binder with dividers and plastic pocket folders
- Sturdy planner – see HSWOW Study Skills for planner tips
- When teachers request more than one – color match all supplies for each subject.
- Duplicate set of books for home and school
- Identical set of texts
Shifting and Transitioning

- Embedded schedule for self monitoring – see next slide
- To do list – see next slide
- Prior warning
- Watches/cell phone alarms/ vibrating timers
- Good enough and personal best
- Before
  - Rehearse
  - Verbal prompts
  - Role play
- During
  - Visuals/ non-verbals
  - Window of time
- After
  - Praise
  - Debrief
Schedules and to-do lists

Embedded schedules for younger children
- List the activities
- Use photos or clip art
- Laminate the card
- Child self monitors with a paper clip
- Paper clips are collected and traded for a prize

To-do lists for older students
- Clipboards/mini-white-boards, tear offs
- List all activities
- Check off as completed
- Hand in as a voucher
Self-talk

- Model model model!
- Oral lists
- Oral repetition of instructions/directions
- Use of ordinal numbers or sequence words
- Use of cues
- Use of external self-talk leads to eventual silent internal dialogue
Reinforcement

- Deliver praise
  - Enthusiastically
  - Specifically
  - Immediately

Praise student effort above achievement.

Remember – scaffolding isn’t like a crutch, it’s like the abc chart on the first grade wall – only those who need it use it.
Reinforcement

- Something fun at the finish line
- Tangibles
- Increased responsibility
- Privileges
- Crafts
- Mystery activities/trips

As adults we’ve outsourced and delegated many of the tasks that are difficult for us to do – children rarely have that luxury – let’s reinforce the effort they are making.
Handle with care.

- Pick one area and one area only, to begin coaching or scaffolding.
- Once the student sees the success, you can branch out to other areas.
- View the support as a work in progress – prepare to adjust and tweak your plan.
- Get feedback from everyone who is involved – your child/student, the teacher, the tutor.
- Give it time – Rome wasn’t built in a day!

Removing the support/independence isn’t always the end goal – successful executive functioning is.

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For more information...

- *Annie’s Plan* by Jeanne Kraus (Tomorrow will be better)
- *Kids in the Syndrome Mix* by Dr. Martin Kutscher
- *Smart but Scattered* by Peg Dawson and Richard Guare
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<tr>
<td>November 14, 2012</td>
<td>Ecology of the Classroom</td>
<td>Kate Sussman</td>
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<td>December 19, 2012</td>
<td>Temperament- Understanding Children's Pre-set Tendencies</td>
<td>Dr. Rona Novick</td>
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<td>February 13, 2013</td>
<td>Higher Order Thinking</td>
<td>Karen Kruger</td>
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<td>March 13, 2013</td>
<td>Internet Treasures and Tools for Literacy and Writing</td>
<td>Jeannie Crowley</td>
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<td>April 17, 2013</td>
<td>Focus on the Shy and Anxious Child</td>
<td>Meryl Silver</td>
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For more information visit: [www.hiddensparks.org](http://www.hiddensparks.org)
About Hidden Sparks

Hidden Sparks is a non-profit whose purpose is to help children with learning differences reach their full potential in school and life. Hidden Sparks develops and supports professional development programs for Jewish day schools to help increase understanding and support for teaching to diverse learners.

Guided by a philosophy that by helping schools meet the needs of children with learning and behavioral differences, ultimately all students will benefit, Using a coaching model, Hidden Sparks mentors provide professional development in neurodevelopment, temperament and behavior, and guide classroom teachers in understanding and helping the struggling students.

The Hidden Sparks coaching model and curriculum is currently used in 24 Jewish Day Schools/Yeshivot in New York and is beginning this year in Baltimore, through a partnership with SHEMA. An additional 4 schools from southern US cities also participate with Hidden Sparks and more than 20 schools have been served by Hidden Sparks through the No Child Left Behind. Hidden Sparks is the proud recipient of a Covenant Foundation grant, recognizing excellence in Jewish education, and is honored to have been listed in SLINGSHOT among the 50 most innovative Jewish organizations in the US.
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