

Supporting Executive Functions

Tools for Parents at Home

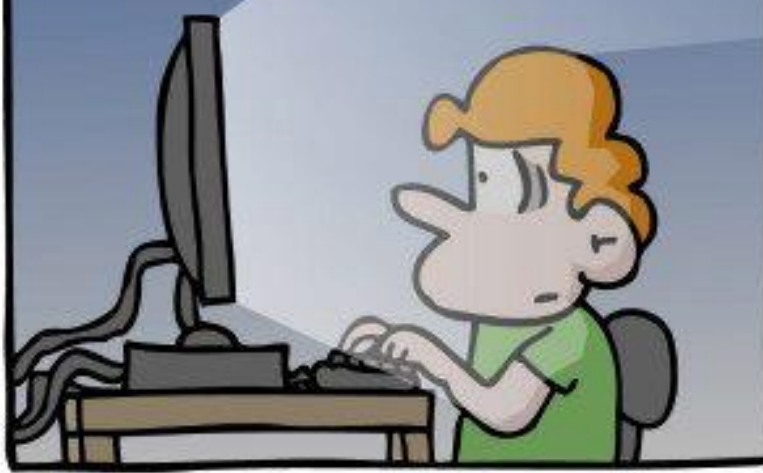
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RALPH, I FINALLY ADMITTED
TO MYSELF THAT I HAD
A REAL PROBLEM WITH
PROCRASTINATION.



SO I WENT ONLINE FOR
HOURS AND HOURS
LOOKING FOR DIFFERENT
TIPS TO HELP ME.



OF COURSE, BY THAT
TIME I HAD MISSED
THE DEADLINE FOR
MY RESEARCH PAPER.



Executive Functioning Skills

Executive Functioning Skills are cognitive and self-regulation skills that help you start and finish a task.

1. Response Inhibition

Stop and think before acting.



2. Working Memory

Keep information in mind while also using it.



3. Emotional Control

Manage feelings to accomplish goals, complete tasks, and direct behavior.



4. Sustained Attention

Maintain focus and attention on the task despite distraction, boredom, or tiredness.



5. Task Initiation

Get started on tasks without unnecessary delay.



6. Planning/Prioritization

Make a road map to reach a goal and decide what is important to focus on.



7. Organization

Make a system that keeps track of work and tasks.



8. Time Management

Be aware of time, it passing, how much is needed, how to use it, and to stay within time limits.



9. Goal-directed persistence

Make a goal and work toward it without giving up or getting distracted.



10. Flexibility

Adjust to unexpected changes or problems that come up.



11. Metacognition

Reflect on progress in the moment and review work after completion.



Framed as a personality trait

- Lazy
- Unmotivated
- Messy
- Rude
- Moody

Framed as a skill weakness

- Initiation
- Sustained attention
- Organization
- Regulating impulsivity/inhibition
- Emotional Regulation

**What can we
do when
kids have
not
developed
strong
executive
functions?**

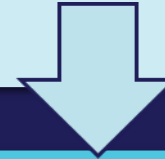
WE LEND THEM OURS

- **Model for them**
- **Scaffold skills**
- **Ask questions to help them build skills**
- **Have compassion**
- ***Encourage, support, believe* that they will build these skills**
- **Highlight successes (5 to 1)**
- **Pull back as they develop stronger skills**

Scaffolding

Providing Support and Fostering Independence

Do the task – Model it for them



Structure task for them



Initiate task for them



Gentle guidance



Independent initiation and completion of task

Focus on Strategies



What is your PLAN?
(Daily practice in homework planning)



EXPERIMENT with different strategies



Ask QUESTIONS that help gently guide and encourage development of executive functions



MODEL: Brief Weekly Family Meetings

Gentle Guidance

Taking on Executive Functions

You can't wait until the last minute again

You need to pick out your book by this weekend

Let me read that. It says you need poster board. Let me get some tomorrow while you are at school

Gentle Guidance

When do you think would be a good time to start?

When would you like to pick out your book by?

Why don't you read the directions to me? Are there any materials you need that we don't have in the house?

Gentle Guidance (cont)

Taking on Executive Functions

I'm going to need to help you with this part.

*You need to proofread your work this time.
Last time you didn't and it hurt your grade.*

*You have soccer after school.
I put your uniform in your backpack*

Gentle Guidance

*What parts of this can you do on your own?
Do you think you will need any help from me?*

*Last time, I remember you lost points
because of spelling . What are you going
to try differently this time?*

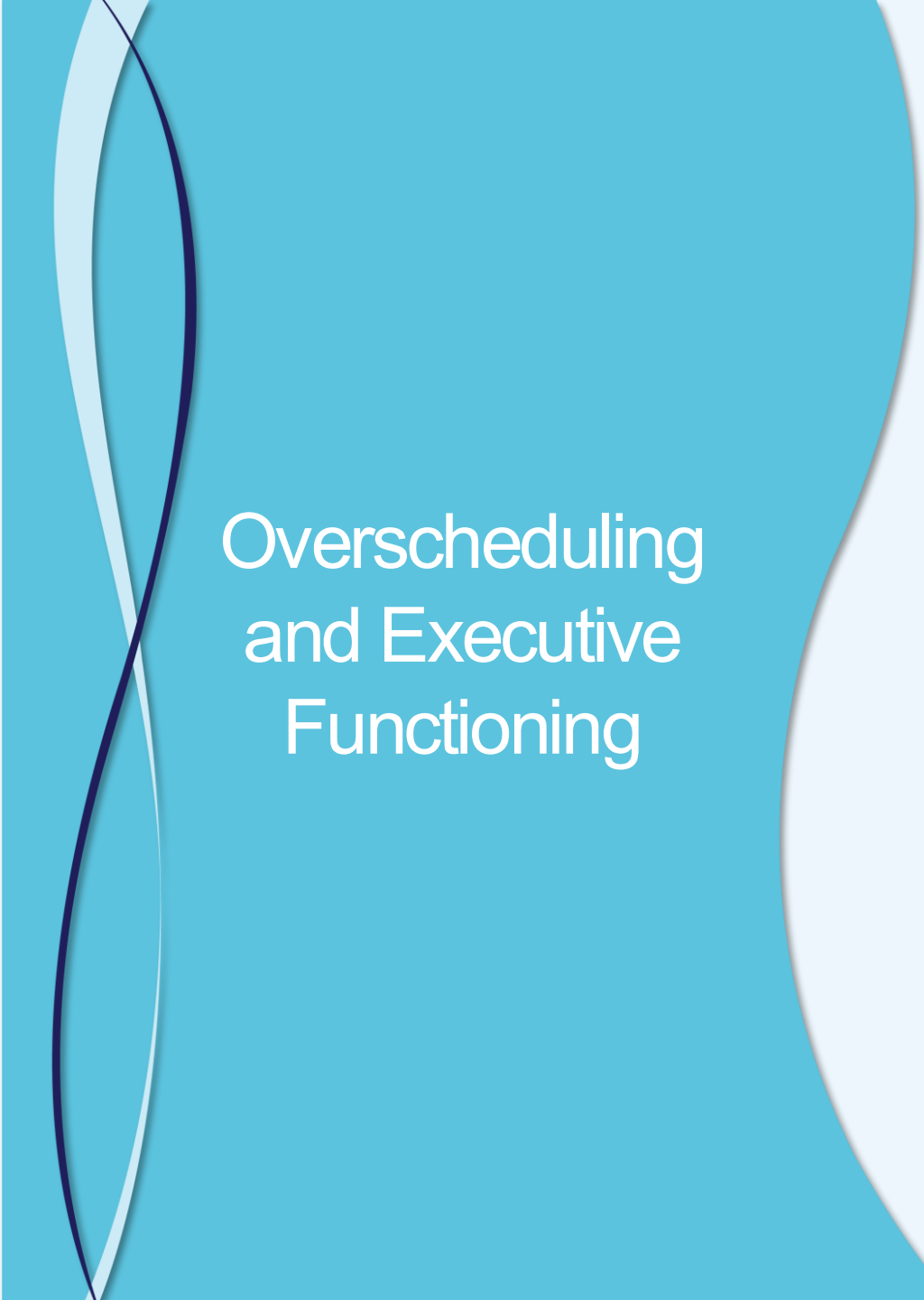
*What do you have after school
and what do you need?*

Homework Plan: Daily Practice in EF

What do you have for homework?

What is your plan?

- What do you think will be easy, hard, in-between?
- How long do you think each task will take?
- Do you want to do easy things first or get hard things out of the way?
- What do you want to do first, second, third?
- When will you take breaks, how long will they be, and what will you do?
- How/when will you get started?
- Where will you work?
- How will you manage distractions?
- Do you need any help?
- How will you celebrate your success?



Overscheduling and Executive Functioning

- Modeling balance
- Buffet Analogy
- We tend to take on their executive functioning when we're overscheduled
- Balanced schedule provides more opportunity to practice Executive Functioning skills



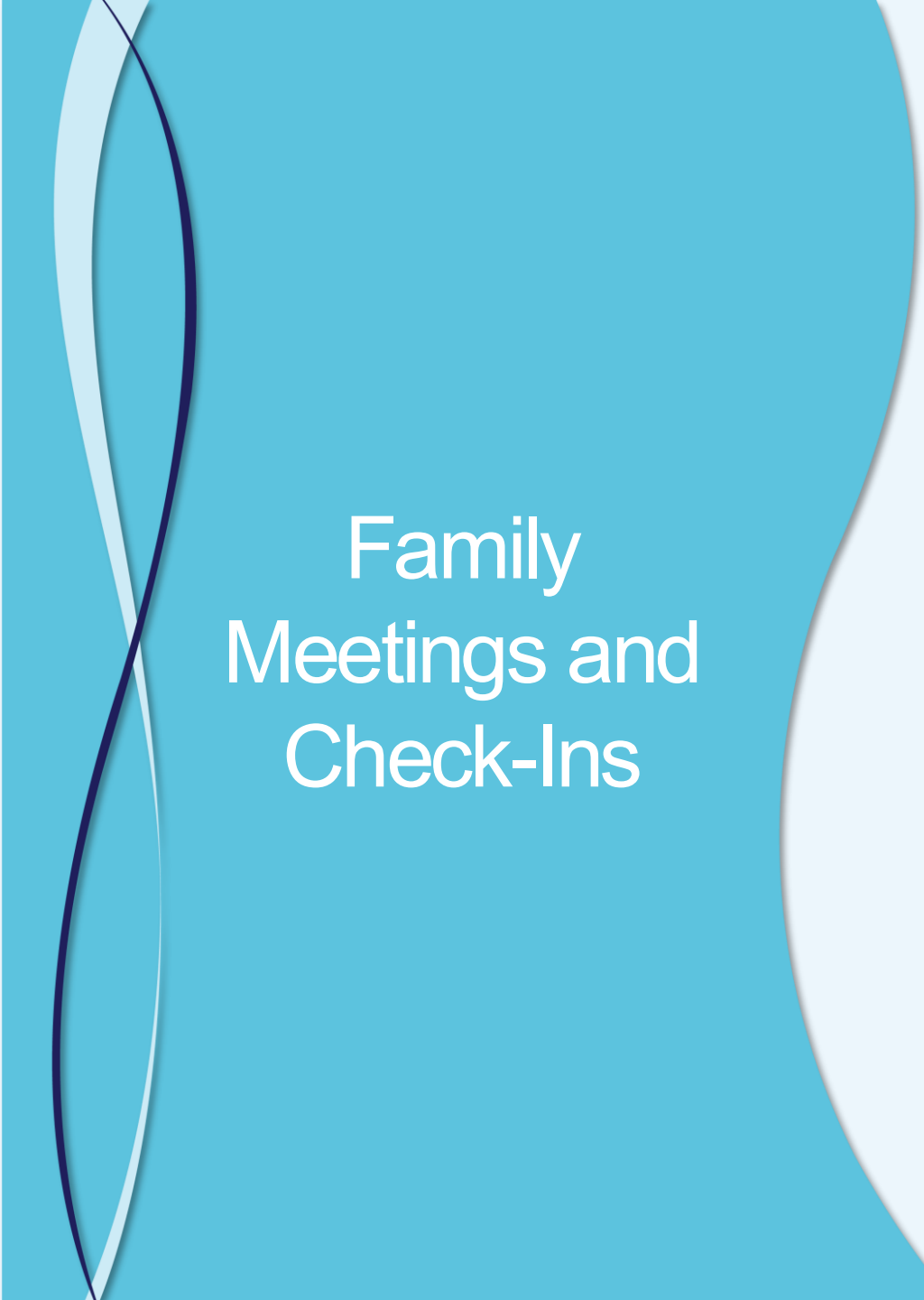
School Breaks: Opportunities for Insight/Awareness

- What has been working for you this semester?
- What do you wish was easier?
- Experimenting with trying something differently
- How was the balance of schoolwork, activities, down time?
Is there anything you want to adjust



Technology

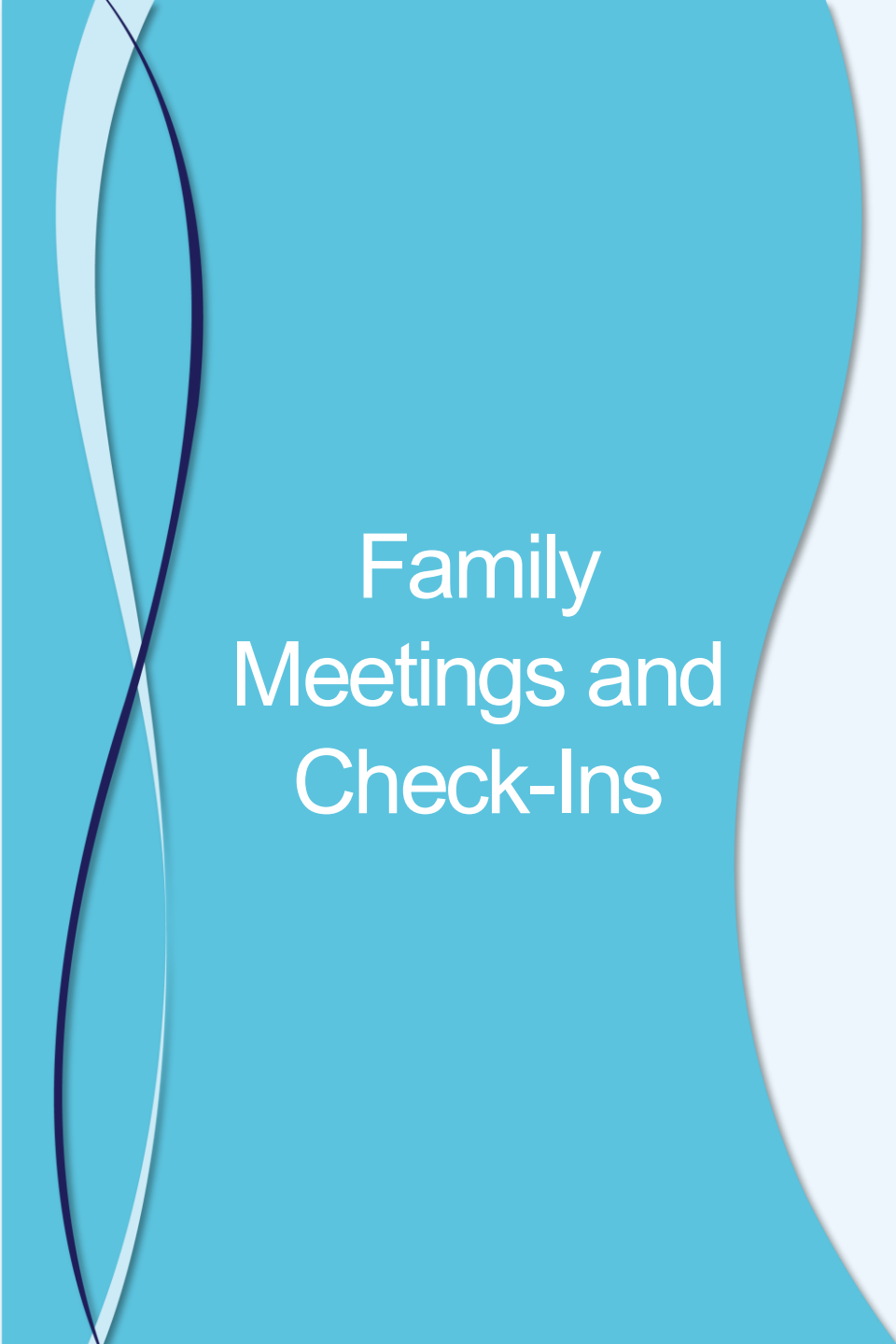
- Can really help and can really get in the way
- Ongoing conversations
- How many tabs are open?
- Where is your phone while you are working?
- Number one skills to work on: How to pull away from technology



Family Meetings and Check-Ins

Benefits

- Build connection
- Reduce stress
- Provides structure and predictability
- Provides opportunity to model and practice executive functioning skills
- Stay organized as a family
- Set expectations



Family Meetings and Check-Ins

How to Run a Family Meeting

Short, Structured and Consistent!

- Set the Stage
 - Pick day and time and stick to it
 - 15-20 min max
 - Distraction-Free space
 - Visual aids (family calendar, whiteboard...)
- Follow a Consistent Agenda
 - Celebrate wins (2-3 mins)
 - Family calendar check (5 mins)
 - Problem-Solving and Planning (5-7 mins)
 - Responsibilities and Roles (3-5 mins)
 - Close with Connection (something motivating and positive)
- Frequent Check-Ins

Turning Mistakes into Strengths

How To Help Build Resilience

- Create a safe space for making mistakes
- Coach, don't rescue
- Encourage problem-solving and independence
- Model resilience

What Kids Learn When You Let Them Fail

- Confidence: *"I can figure things out."*
- Perseverance: *"I don't give up when it's hard."*
- Independence: *"I can try on my own first."*
- Problem-Solving: *"I can find different ways to succeed."*
- Resilience: *"I can make mistakes and know that things will be ok"*

stages of procrastination

chibird.tumblr.com

1. false security



This isn't due for a while!



I'll relax for now.

2. laziness



Maybe I should get a headstart...



Nah!

3. excuses



I'm busy right now.



Just taking a short break...

4. denial



I still have time...



I don't need sleep...

5. crisis

I'll never procrastinate again!



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6. repeat

Getting Support

Partnering with
Teachers

Reach out to
Academic Resource
Center

Executive
Functioning Coach

Psychoeducational
Evaluation

Questions?



Thank you!

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