Executive Functions Quick Start:

WHAT ARE EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS?

An educator's primary responsibility is helping his or her students develop the higher-order organizational and thinking processes that lead to a lifetime of learning. EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS is a collective term for these processes. They include planning, organizing, making decisions, paying attention, regulating behavior, setting goals, solving problems, and evaluating decisions.

WHY ARE EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS IMPORTANT?

Current research suggests that the development of these executive functions is essential for success both in school and later in life.

- Mastery of executive functions is a better predictor of school success than IQ.

- Poor performance in executive functions is associated with high dropout rates, drug use, and crime.

- Self-regulation skills predict development across all domains, emotional and academic.

HOW DOES THE EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS PROGRAM WORK?

The Executive Functions program is a research-based classroom curriculum. Rush NeuroBehavioral Center, an affiliate of Rush University Medical Center, partnered with Premier to develop the Executive Functions program based on a firm understanding of how the brain works.

The program is specifically designed to support the step-by-step development of executive functions and the enhancement of higher-order thinking skills in an effort to optimize students' educational performance. The curriculum has been written for implementation on a classroom basis across all content areas and for all types of learners.

ORGANIZATION OF THE EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS PROGRAM:

The Executive Functions program is made up of three components that work together to facilitate the teaching and execution of a school-wide curriculum based on shared language and consistent reinforcement.

1. Curriculum Notebook for teachers

2. Student Guide for students

3. Online resources

GETTING STARTED WITH THE EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS PROGRAM:

The Curriculum Notebook for teachers covers seven units:

- Classroom Structures & Learning Environment
- Materials Management
- Time Management & Planning
- Study Strategies
- Goal Setting
- Decision Making & Problem Solving
- Learning Strengths

1. Begin with the first unit to set up effective classroom systems for your school year.

2. Next, review the Scope and Sequence. Here you will find a suggestion of lessons that build upon each other and reinforce the mastery of skills throughout the year. However, the program is flexible. Select the unit that will best serve the immediate needs of your students.

3. Have students take the Self-Assessment in the Student Guide for your chosen unit. Record their scores on the corresponding Progress-Monitoring Chart in your Curriculum Notebook.

4. Select the lesson plans within the unit that will most benefit your students based on their Self-Assessment scores, or plan to teach all of the lessons in the unit sequentially.

5. Review the learning objectives and the directions on how to prepare for and introduce the first lesson. Prepare your materials in advance based on the provided list.

6. Follow the step-by-step instructions for implementing the lesson plan. Reinforce the concept with the Bridging to the Classroom and Curriculum Connections activities as needed.
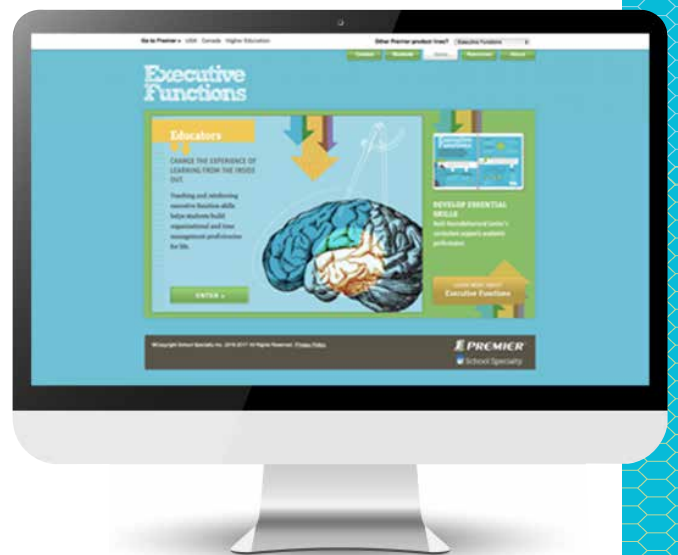
Remember: Each lesson correlates with pages in the Student Guide that allow students to engage lesson objectives and solidify mastery of skills.

MORE TO EXPLORE:

The final page of each unit is a list of Apps and Web Resources you can use to learn more and to plan additional activities for your students.

Need to make more copies of the Self-Assessments, Progress-Monitoring Charts, Teacher Resources, or Student Guide Worksheets? You can go online to executivefunctions.schoolspecialty.com for templates.

On this website, you will also find implementation plans, instructional videos for teachers, an onTRAC® planning video for students, slide decks for classroom presentations, whitepapers on executive functions, information on how the Executive Functions program aligns with the Common Core Standards, and information for parents in English and Spanish.

*Apps and Web Resources included in Executive Functions 2nd Edition