Parenting In Pandemic Times
What Have We Learned?
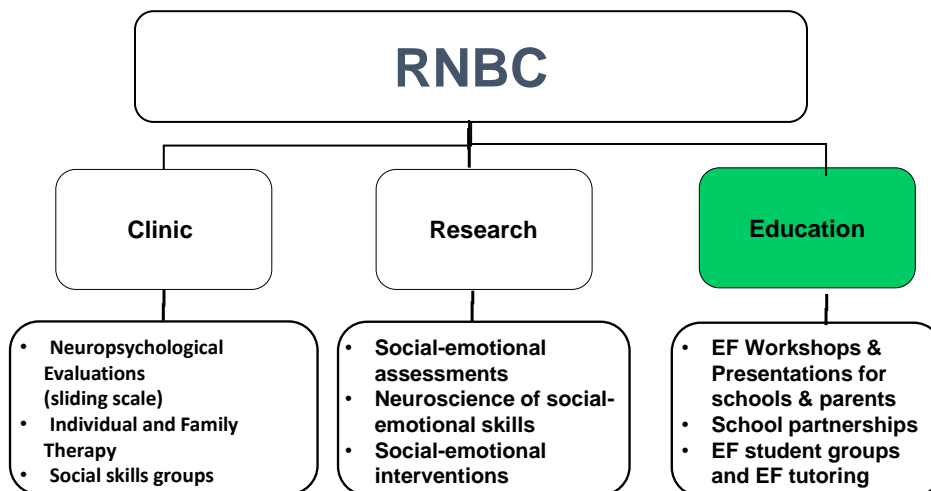
RUSH NEUROBEHAVIORAL CENTER

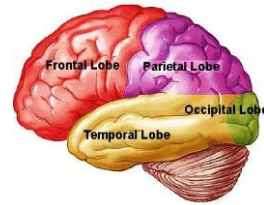**Georgia Bozeday, EdD**
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Rush University Medical Center
Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences
Rush NeuroBehavioral Center

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    │  Clinic  │    │ Research │    │Education │
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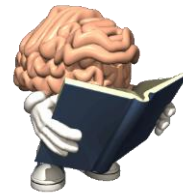| Clinic	Research	Education
• Neuropsychological Evaluations (sliding scale) • Individual and Family Therapy • Social skills groups	• Social-emotional assessments • Neuroscience of social-emotional skills • Social-emotional interventions	• EF Workshops & Presentations for schools & parents • School partnerships • EF student groups and EF tutoring

Executive Function Skills include:

- Goal-directed behaviors
- Organizational processes
- Self regulation
- Time-management activities
- Focusing and maintaining attention
- Strategic, critical, purposeful analysis
- Problem solving
- Flexibility and adaptability
- Self awareness
- Application to social settings

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Executive Function Processes: Educational Implications

Foundational Skills

- Setting goals
- Planning
- Organizing Materials
- Managing Time
- Initiating/Inhibiting
- Self-awareness

Higher-Order Skills

- Monitoring, including goals
- Self regulation
- Reflection & self evaluation
- Strategic thinking & acting, socially and cognitively
- Problem solving

Three Organizing Areas Related to Executive Function Skills That Are More At Risk In the Pandemic Environment

Structure and Order

~ **Neuroscience**

~ **Application: What Have We Learned from the Pandemic?**

Strategic Thinking and Problem Solving

~ **Neuroscience**

~ **Application: What Have We Learned from the Pandemic?**

Social-Emotional Development

~ **Neuroscience**

~ **Application: What Have We Learned from the Pandemic?**

Executive Function Considerations Organizing Area #1

Structure and Order

• **Neuroscience perspective:**

   ~ **Uncovering the process of brain developmental**

   ~ **Reaching automaticity through routines and forming habits**

   ~ **Inhibiting distractions; Focusing attention**

Brain Development: Birth to Older Age

When Do Executive Function Skills Develop?

> *"The brain is not the immutable machine we once thought it to be. The cellular components are flexible.* **They change with experience, circumstance, and need."**
> *Carr, The Shallows*

Executive Function skills begin developing shortly after birth with ages 3 to 5 providing a window of opportunity for dramatic growth. The Executive Functions areas continue developing throughout adolescence and early adulthood.

Weintraub, et al., (2011)
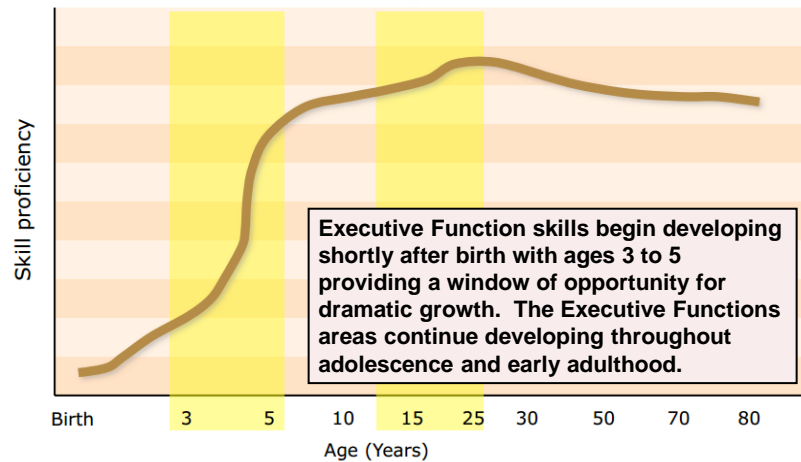
Center on the Developing Child ♦ HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Practice Makes Perfect
Building Automaticity Through Routines

- It takes a minimum **66 days** to form a new habit, assuming consistent reinforcement for the behavior every day

- If you begin practicing a behavior (e.g., writing assignments in your planner) on September 1st, most students (approximately 80%) will achieve automaticity (independent stability) in using this behavior around Halloween

- Our work with schools has shown that, in classrooms that reinforce using a planner, **85-90% of students will achieve automaticity by Thanksgiving**, leaving 10% to 15% of your students (in a classroom of 25 students, this equals 2-to-3 students) who might continue to need ongoing support to achieve master this behavior.

What Gets in the Way of Focusing Attention?
How Much Time Per Day
Do Students Use Screens?

**American teenagers
(13-18) average about
nine hours of media use
per day, excluding
media use for schoolwork.**

**Tweens (8-12) average
about six hours per day.**

Figure 1. On any given day, proportion of tweens who spend ...
with screen media

6%
11%
28%
27%
27%

- No time
- 2 hours or less
- 2-4 hours
- 4-8 hours
- >8 hours
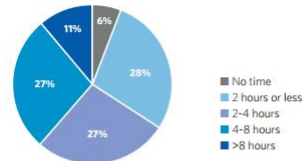
Figure 2. On any given day, proportion of teens who spend ...
with screen media

6%
17%
26%
20%
31%

- No time
- 2 hours or less
- 2-4 hours
- 4-8 hours
- >8 hours
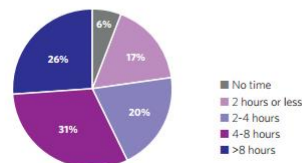
Note: Segments may not add to 100% due to rounding.

With so much media time

What's Getting Short Changed?

1. **Play = Problem-solving skills, creativity**

2. **Movement, physical activity**

3. **Social-emotional learning, social skills**

4. **Speech & language development**

5. **Family time and communication**

6. **Sleep**

Executive Function Considerations
Organizing Area #1

<u>Structure and Order</u>

- **Practical Application: What have we learned so far?**
  - **~ Organizing the study environment**
  - **~ Organizing materials**
  - **~ Establishing routines for basic time management**

**Help Structure the
Study Environment**

<u>Organize the following:</u>
- **Study Area**
- **Backpack**
- **Computer**
- **Filing System**

<u>Plan to:</u>
- **Establish Routines**
- **Control Distractions**

Help Construct and Maintain the **Materials System**

Contents

1. Planner
2. Sheet protectors
3. Two-pocket folders
4. Notebooks
5. Extra paper
6. Supplies (calculators, rulers, sticky notes)

Don't Overstuff
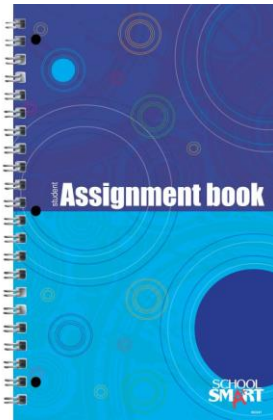
Filing by Unit

1. Remove returned work

2. Label unit and clamp papers together

3. File in crate (home/school)
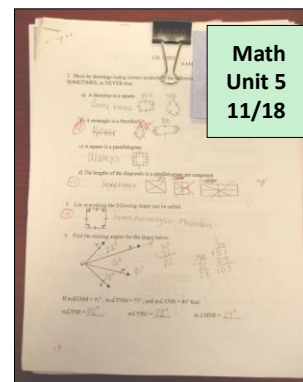
File materials that might be needed later to prepare for tests, finals, or projects.

Math Unit 5 11/18

What do most kids say when asked,
"What do you use this for?"

"What do you use your assignment notebook for?"

To Write Down Homework Assignments…

Which is Why I Don't Need It, because…..

I can remember my assignments in my head
I can get the assignments on line
I can call/text a friend to get the assignments
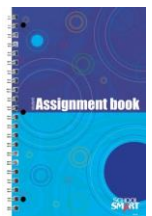
The response to this question changes when we call this resource

A Planner

Filling Out the Planner

☑ Record Assignment

☑ Write NH for No Homework

☑ Break down long-term assignments

☑ Record quizzes and test dates

☑ Enter after-school activities

Prioritizing Assignments

☑ Organize by due date

☑ Start with the hardest

☑ Estimate time

☑ Check off when completed

E-learning and Prioritizing

☑ Create an Assignment TO DO LIST

☑ Estimate Time for each Assignment

☑ Prioritize using the 3 D's

☑ Use the planner or a blank page to Make a Plan!

E-learning and Planners

- Planners may seem unnecessary, but in fact, they are even MORE important now!

- Students can use their planner to MAKE A PLAN!

- They can also help students to create and manage a schedule

Application to Family and Home Experiences

Organizing belongings and materials related to out-of-school activities, e.g., sports, clubs, interests, and organizations, social groups, etc.

Keeping track of home-related routines

A. Setting up a schedule that reflects use of out-of-school time to fulfill both school and non-school responsibilities

B. Develop a calendar system to keep track of non-school activities and other obligations

Executive Function Considerations
# Organizing Area #2

Strategic Thinking and Problem Solving

• **Neuroscience perspective**

  ~ Flexibility and adaptability

  ~ Maximizing working memory

As We Learn More, We Get Smarter

Characteristics of Flexibility and Adaptability

1. As circumstances change, we adjust our responses accordingly

2. As our knowledge of a topic or subject area becomes more complex and deepens through layers of information, we hold the option to change our mind as we recognize nuances and refine our understandings.
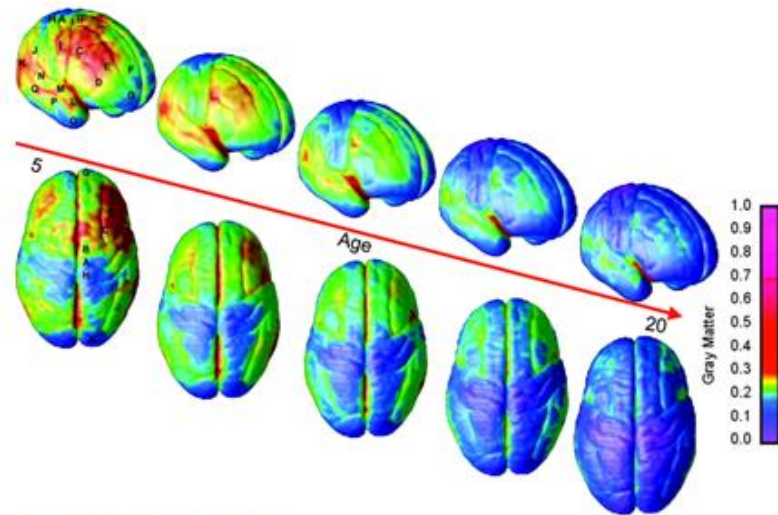
Gogtay N et al. PNAS 2004;101:8174-8179

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PNAS

Application of Memory Research to Learning

1. **Start with a "Hook"** Fire neurons!
   Use prediction and curiosity
2. **Activate Prior Knowledge:**
   Spiraling and Scaffolding
3. **Use Story as Context:**
   Narrative builds memory
4. **Personal Connections:**
   Learning stores in long-term memory
5. **Variety of Modalities:**
   Assists access in long-term memory
6. **Incorporate Emotion:**
   Facilitates access and storage

Executive Function Considerations
Organizing Area #2

- **Practical Application: What have we learned so far?**

  ~ Using higher-order time management and implementing problem-solving strategies

Executive Functions Curriculum
Key Lesson #1

Time Management:
Task Analysis
Project Recycle

Project Recycle

For this project you will need to interview one family member and three neighbors about their recycling habits. You will need to ask them questions about what they do with paper, cans, glass, and other items. You will need to make a list of questions ahead of time that you will ask them during the interview. Once you have finished the four interviews, write 3 paragraphs explaining their recycling habits. Chart their responses in a bar graph showing their method for recycling (separating all items, throwing all items in the garbage, just recycling certain items, etc.). Then, you will create a poster showing how you can encourage more people in your community to recycle. Finally, prepare a ten minute presentation explaining what you learned.

Task Analysis:
Project Recycle: Break it Down

1. Schedule Interviews
2. Write questions
3. Interview 2 people
4. Interview 2 people
5. Make bar graph
6. Write paragraph
7. Buy materials for poster
8. Create a poster
9. Prepare presentation
10. Practice

Hidden Steps!

Project Recycle:
# Comparing Written and Hidden Steps

Written Steps

1. Make list of questions
2. Interview 1 fam & 3 neighbors
3. Ask interviewees questions
4. Write 3 paragraphs about recycling habits
5. Create bar graph chart showing responses
6. Create a poster to encourage more recycling
7. Prepare 10-min. presentation

Hidden Steps

1. Research recycling topic
2. Brainstorm poss. questions
3. Decide people to interview
4. Schedule appointments for interviews
5. Develop a method to take notes/record interviews
6. Calculate responses for bar graph
7. Get materials for poster
8. Practice presentation

Break it Down

1. Schedule Interviews
2. Write questions
3. Interview 2 people
4. Interview 2 people
5. Make bar graph
6. Write paragraph
7. Create a poster
8. Prepare presentation
9. Practice
10. Present!

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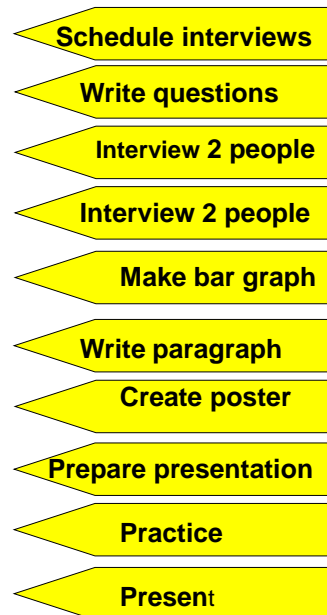
Transfer to Planner
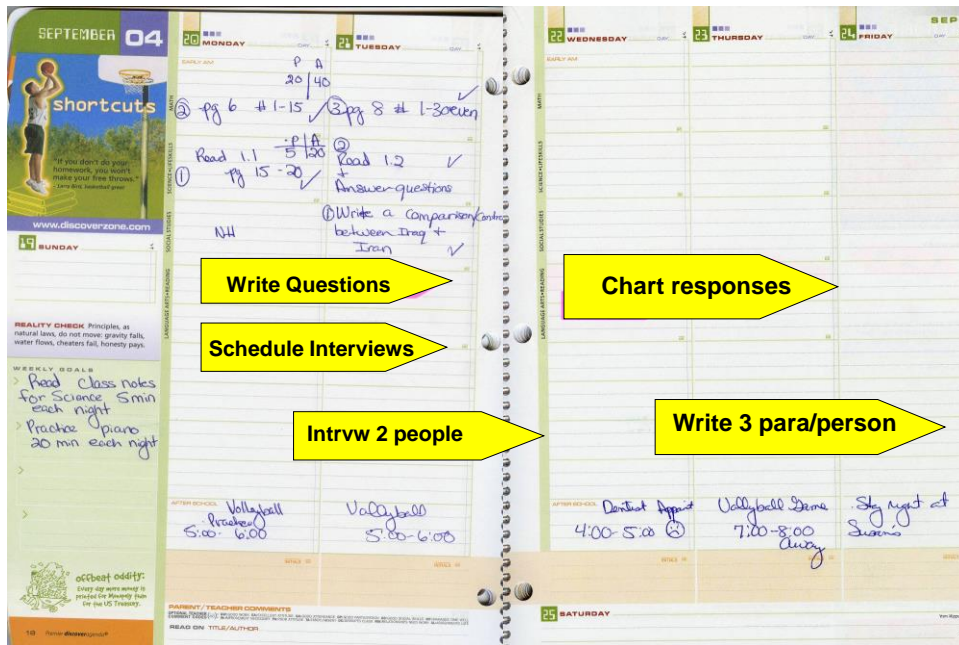
Application to Family and Home Experiences

• Using Task Analysis strategy to break down home/family-related tasks

~ Begin (and as often as possible) by asking your child to help you with a multi-faceted undertaking by contributing to the discussion relative to breaking it down into small steps and seeing it through to completion

~ An example of application of task analysis for a responsibility within your child's domain might be breaking down and assignment a plan with due dates relative to your child cleaning his/her room at home

Remember: Lists are your friends!

What happens when things go awry?
When the schedule gets off track?

Executive Function Considerations
Organizing Area #3

<u>Social-Emotional Development</u>

- **Neuroscience perspective:**
  - ~ **Maintaining a presence with self-awareness**
  - ~ **Understanding the impact stress has on maintaining focus and exercising good decision-making**

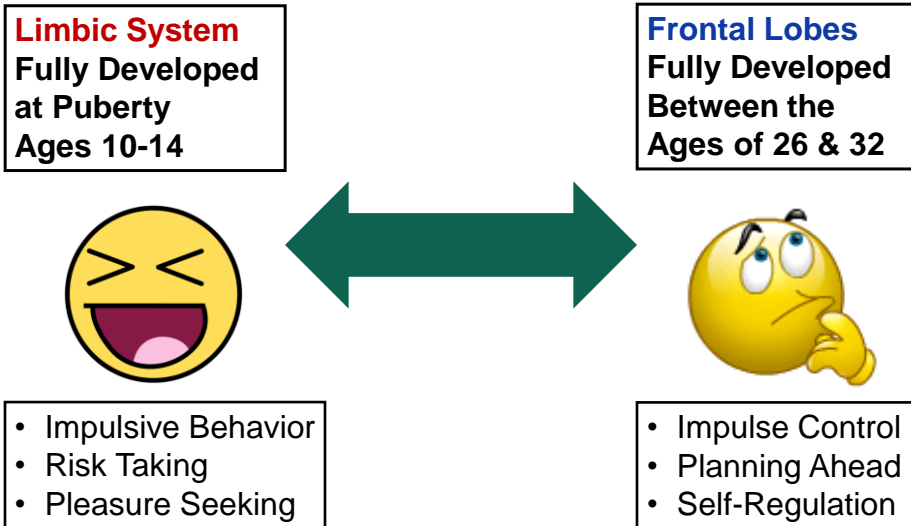## Brain Development
As We Learn More, We Get Smarter

- Maturation occurs from back-to-front of the brain

- Images of brain development in healthy youth (ages 5 – 20)

- Blue represents maturing of brain areas

- Recent research indicates that frontal lobes may continue developing throughout the 20s and early 30s
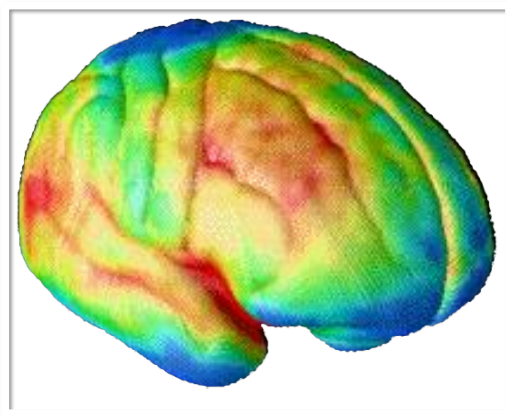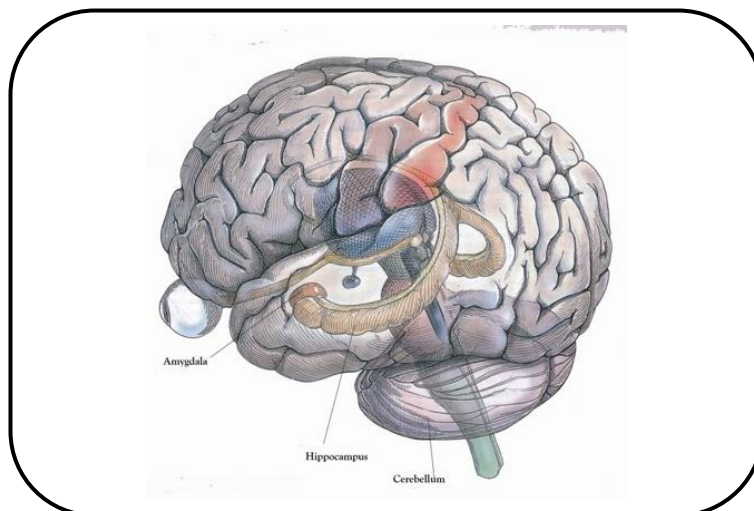
Source: Gogtay, Giedd, et al., 2004.

Copyright © 2004 The National Academy of Sciences, USA
Gogtay, N., Giedd, J.N., et al. (2004)
Dynamic mapping of human cortical development during childhood through early adulthood
Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 101 (21), 8174 – 8179

Disparity in Development of Limbic System and Frontal Lobes

Limbic System
Fully Developed
at Puberty
Ages 10-14

Frontal Lobes
Fully Developed
Between the
Ages of 26 & 32

- Impulsive Behavior
- Risk Taking
- Pleasure Seeking

- Impulse Control
- Planning Ahead
- Self-Regulation

How does stress effect our decision-making abilities? What is the role of emotional responses?
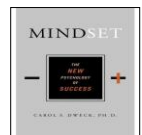
Executive Function Considerations
Organizing Area #3

Social-Emotional Development

- **Practical Application: What have we learned so far?**
  - ~ **Integrating Growth Mindset practices**
  - ~ **Incorporating social skills and personalize learning**
  - ~ **Using mindfulness and other calming approaches**

## Mindset Beliefs That Guide Teaching and Parenting

Fixed Mindset	Growth Mindset
Intelligence is set at birth	Intelligence can be developed
Reinforced through traditional praise	Reinforced through a recognition of effort
Challenges and problems are threatening because you fear you lack competency	Challenges are exciting because you believe in your ability to solve problems
Control is External resulting in feeling over-confident and/or anxious, especially when faced with challenges	Control is Internal resulting in feeling confident, especially when faced with challenges

Three Factors In Application Model for Using a Growth Mindset
1. Use a Coaching Style
2. Use specific descriptors when giving feedback about effort
3. Help child delineate strategies to overcome obstacles

Let's build on the natural inclination to follow a **Growth Mindset!**
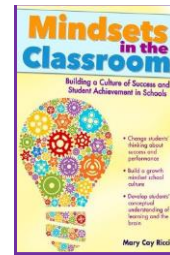
Grade	Fixed Mindset	Growth Mindset
K	0%	100%
1	10%	90%
2	18%	82%
3	42%	58%
MS	65%	35%

Source: *Mindsets in the Classroom* by Mary Cay Ricci

Tips for Applying Growth Mindset

1. **If you find yourself saying, "Good job" add "And here's why I said that…" then follow this statement with specific, descriptive feedback.**

2. **Use the word "notice" when making observations. Use the word "yet" when talking about getting stuck in making progress by encountering an obstacle.**

3. **Remember to ask more questions and answer less. Listen quietly more than you talk; ask for your child's opinion; ask what they think about different topics.**

4. **Find ways to ask them to help you.**

5. **When appropriate, begin feedback statements with, "It's not your fault."**

Best Ways to Engage Kids of All Ages
(And Build Executive Function Skills)

- **Use self-talk** (inner speech) and putting thoughts in writing to calm self-doubts and connect with self-confidence

- **Encourage positive, supportive peer interactions.** Kids will often give each other the same advice adults might give them – but they pay more attention to their peers!

- **Personalize learning.** Ask kids to connect their learning projects to higher-level goals and purposes. Feature interest and passion-based approaches

- Coach kids to **connect information to real-life situations** both in the world and in their lives

- Engage kids to **incorporate specific planning strategies into projects** and activities they find interesting, scaffolding skill sets

Mindfulness & Brain Break Resources

Active Brain Break Resources

- Go Noodle Online, organized by age/grade level
- Games and Other Ice Breaker Activities

Quiet/Calming Resources

- Mind Up: Primary, Upper Elementary, Middle School
- Yoga