

# **Fostering Executive Function Skills**

**Elementary• Middle School Focused**



Landmark Learns

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# Agenda

- **Introduction**
- **Definition of Executive Function**
- **Landmark's Six Teaching Principles**
- **Organizational Strategies**
- **Brown's Six Clusters of Executive Function**
- **Questions**

# **Definition of Executive** **Function**

# Executive Function

**“Executive function is the brain’s ability to coordinate the cognitive and psychological processes needed to initiate, sustain, monitor, and adapt the behaviors and attitudes required to achieve a goal” (2012, p.2).**

**Patricia Newhall**

**Language-Based Learning Series: Executive Function: Foundations for Learning and Teaching**

# Executive Function

“Observing the problems that result when attention fails has allowed me to notice the effects of attentional processes on multiple aspects of daily life. Documenting the interconnected improvements that occur when attentional impairments are effectively treated has shown me the subtle but powerful linkages between attention and multiple aspects of the brain’s management system. All of these observations have led me to conclude that attention is essentially a name for the integrated operation of the executive functions of the brain.” (2008, p.1).

Thomas Brown, PhD.

*Executive Functions: Six Aspects of a Complex Syndrome.*

# Landmark's Six Teaching Principles

1. Provide opportunities for our students to experience success.
2. Use multisensory approaches to teach.
3. Use micro-units and structured tasks for every student.
4. Ensure automatization through practice and review.
5. Provide models for our students to use as a guide.
6. Include our students in the learning process.



# Organizational Strategies



**It's never too early to start learning!**

# Importance of Organizational Skills

- Increased time on task
- More efficient use of time
- Increased quality of work
- Reduced number of questions
- Increased independence
- Additional self-confidence

Don't do for your child what they can do for themselves!!!

(Even though it's so much quicker and easier.)



# Organizational Strategies






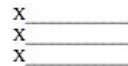


- **Materials**
- **Space or Location**
- **Time**

**Here are some ways that we work on these at Landmark EMS.**






# Organization of Materials

## Ready for class checklist

**Ready For Class Checklist**

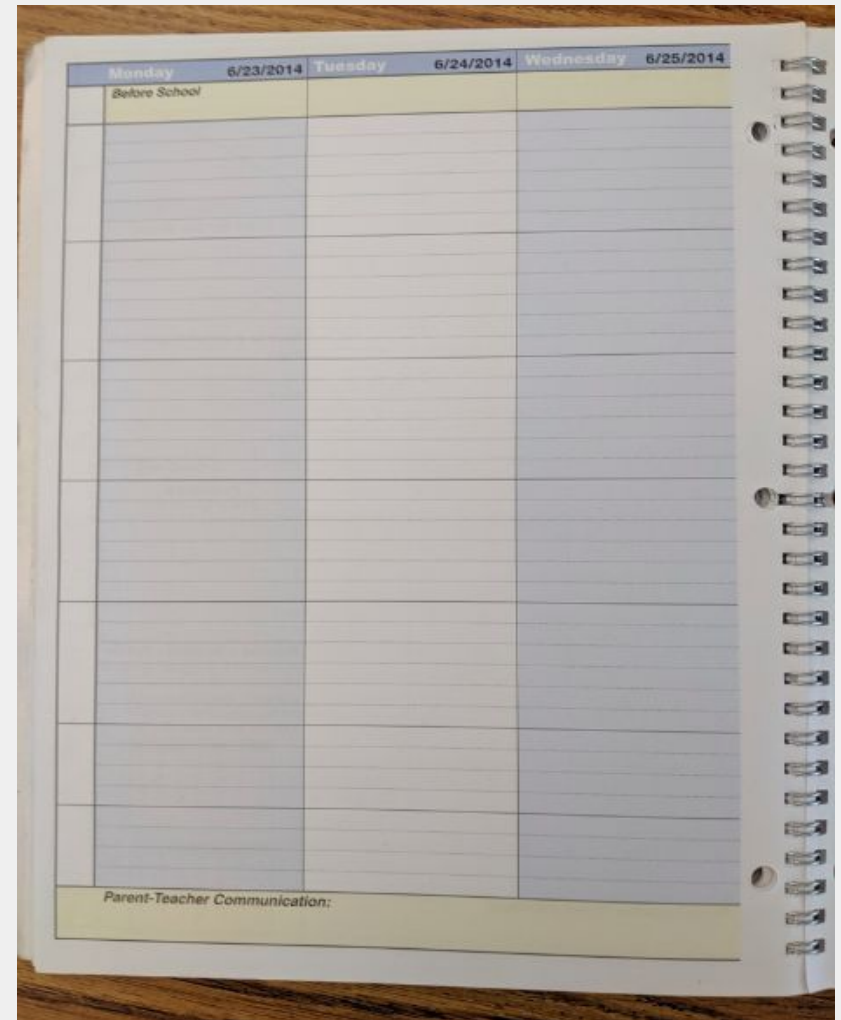
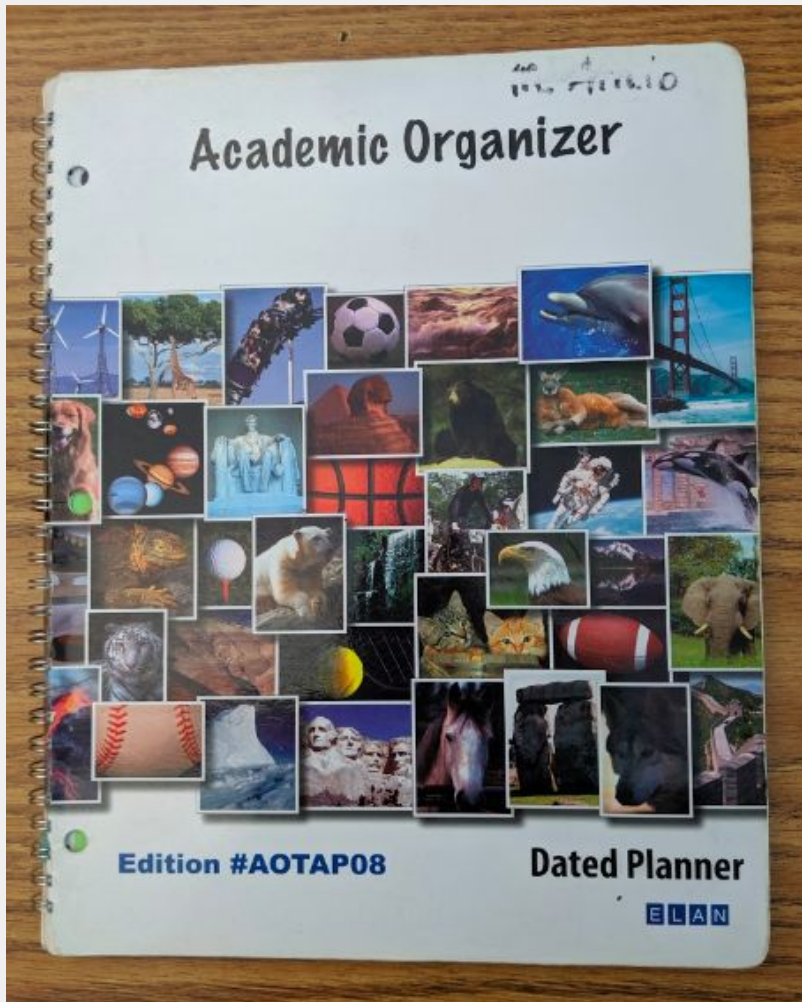
- 1) Binder 
- 2) Hats and Jackets off, walkways clear  
- 3) Sharpened Pencil 
- 4) Homework Out 
- 5) Check Name, Date, and Day 
- 6) Write in Assignment Notebook 
- 7) Proofread homework 

**READY FOR CLASS ✓LIST**

- ① Get Your Binder 
- ② Take out a pencil 
- ③ Take out your homework  
and correcting utensil 
- ④ Check your Name  
Date  
Day
- ⑤ Write in your Assignment Book 
- ⑥ Proofread your homework  
- try to find & fix at least  
one error! 

# Organization of Materials

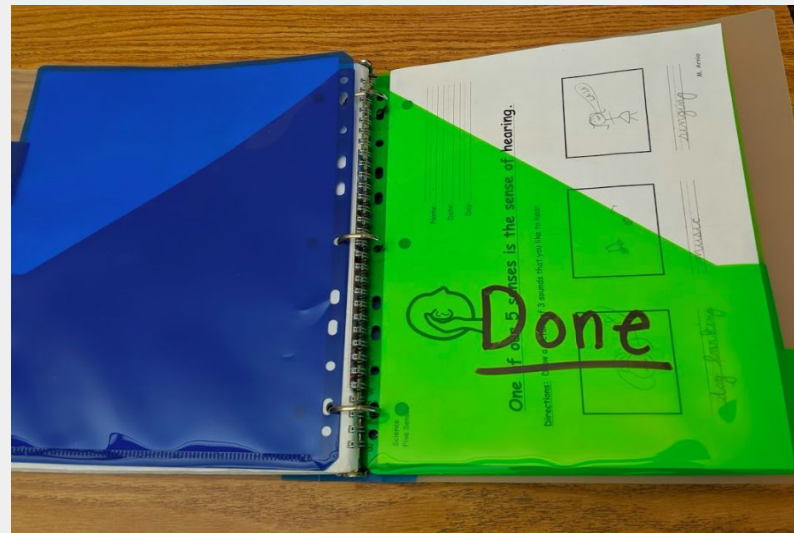
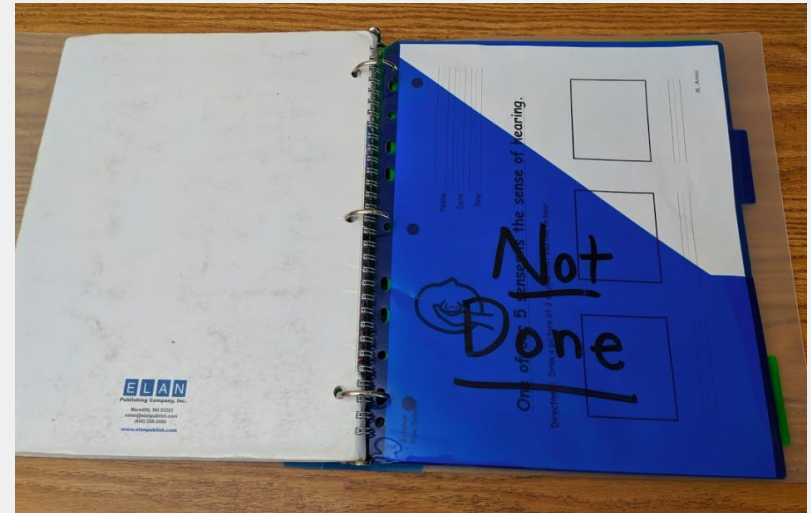
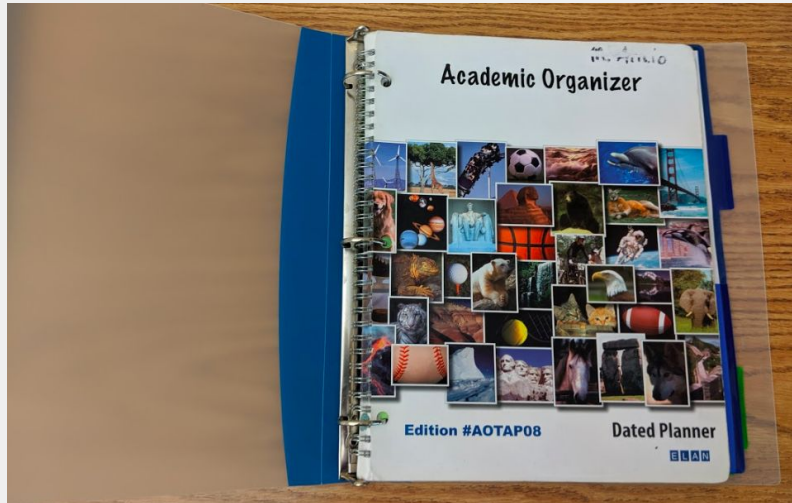
## Assignment notebook





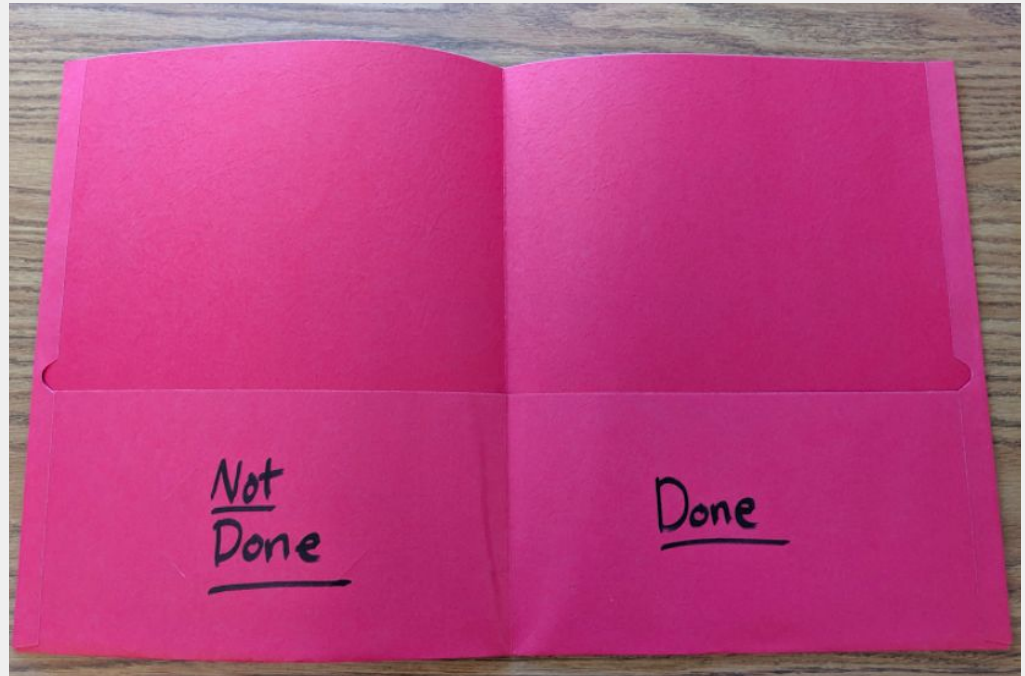
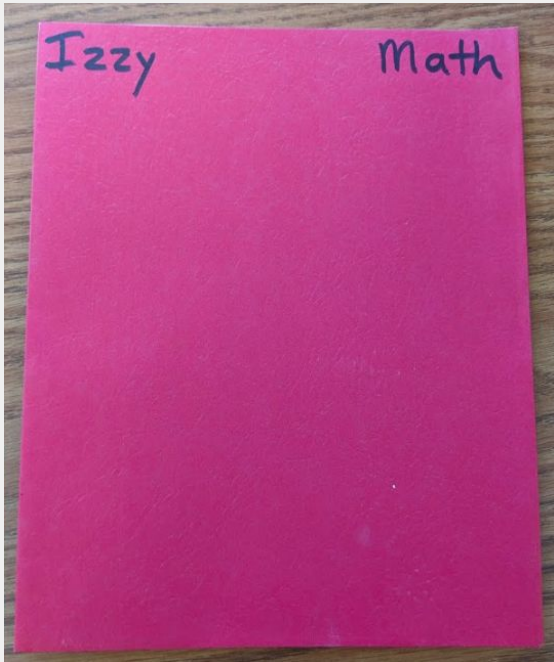
# Organization of Materials

## Homework Binder and Folders



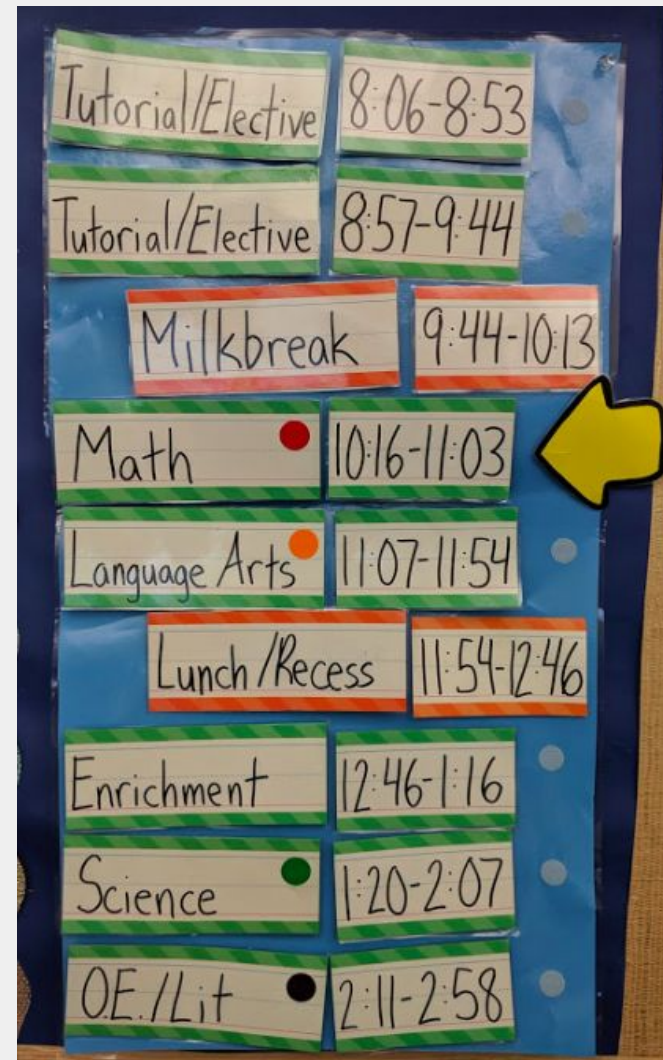
# Organization of Materials

## Class Folders



# Organization of Materials

## Class Folders





# Organization of Space or Location

## Personal Space: Desk



# Organization of Space or Location

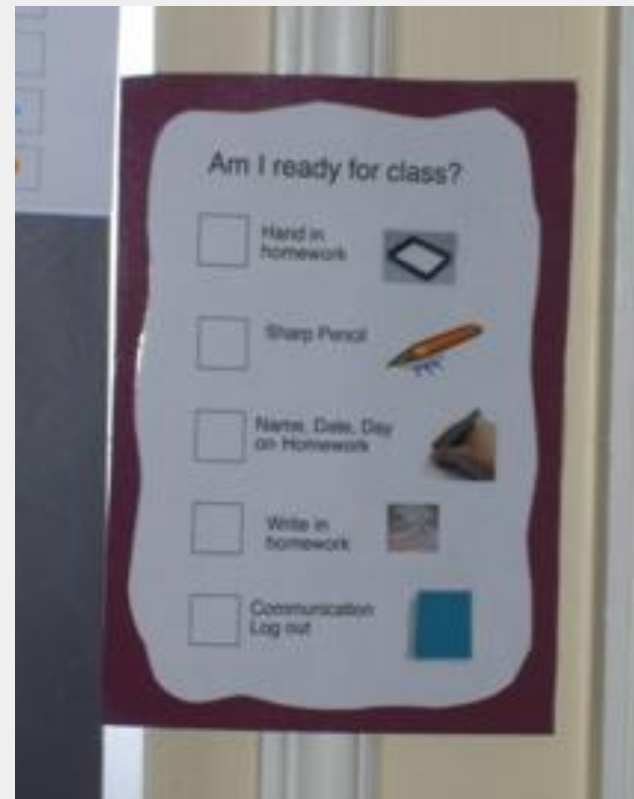
## Classroom Space: Community supplies or materials





# Organization of Space or Location

## Visual Schema Strategy (Sarah Ward, M.S., CCC/SLP)



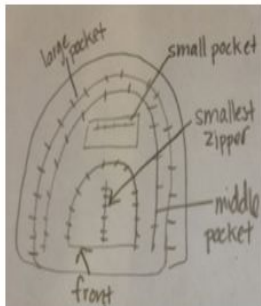
# Organization of Space or Location

## Personal Space: Backpack

### Backpack Plan

1) Draw a sketch of your backpack, and label the pockets.

Example:



Your Sketch:

2) Write your pocket names in the boxes and list what will live there!

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Backpack Checklist Luggage Tags

Use our sample lists for small and large tags, or create your own. Just slip your list into the tag and attach it to your child's backpack.

For a small (business card-sized) luggage tag (2" x 3½"):



To School	To Home
<i>Do I have:</i>	<i>Do I have:</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Completed homework?	<input type="checkbox"/> Homework assignments?
<input type="checkbox"/> Lunch/lunch money?	<input type="checkbox"/> Lunch box?
<input type="checkbox"/> Binder/notebooks?	<input type="checkbox"/> Binder/notebooks?
<input type="checkbox"/> Books?	<input type="checkbox"/> Books?
<input type="checkbox"/> Gym clothes?	<input type="checkbox"/> Dirty gym clothes?
<input type="checkbox"/> Daily planner?	<input type="checkbox"/> Daily planner signed?
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Graded work/teacher's notes?
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____



Color in top and fill out checklist

To School	To Home
<i>Do I have:</i>	<i>Do I have:</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____



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# Organization of Time

Posted agenda for day and class

Tutorial/Elective	8:06-8:53
Tutorial/Elective	8:57-9:44
Milkbreak	9:44-10:13
Math	10:16-11:03
Language Arts	11:07-11:54
Lunch/Recess	11:54-12:46
Enrichment	12:46-1:16
Science	1:20-2:07
OE./Lit	2:11-2:58

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Warm Up
<input type="checkbox"/> Vocab Mat
<input type="checkbox"/> Read and Answer
<input type="checkbox"/> Ball Toss
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> abc order

# Organization of Time

## Timers or Clocks

- Give a verbal cue at midpoint and when nearing end
- Use for tasks that are meant to be shorter in duration



# Time Management: Time Estimation

- Model how to estimate
- Reinforce with visual cues
- Provide guided practice





# Organization of Time

Use calendars to see long term goals/upcoming events



# **Brown's Six Clusters of** **Executive Function**

# Thomas Brown breaks executive function down into six different “clusters.”

1. **ACTIVATION:** Organizing, prioritizing, and activating for tasks
2. **FOCUS:** Focusing, sustaining, and shifting attention to task
3. **EFFORT:** Regulating alertness, sustaining effort, and processing speed
4. **EMOTION:** Managing frustration, and modulating emotions
5. **MEMORY:** Utilizing working memory and accessing recall
6. **ACTION:** Monitoring and self-regulating action



# 1. ACTIVATION

Organizing, prioritizing and activating for tasks

- Agenda on the board
- Track as we move through the class/day
- Filing items as they are finished
- Using the same system for all classes



## 2. FOCUS

Focusing, sustaining and shifting attention to task

- Limit distractions/items on and in desk
- Tasks of short duration to ensure success
- Give clear task transitions and a heads up for when transitions will occur



## 3. EFFORT

Regulating alertness, sustaining effort and processing speed

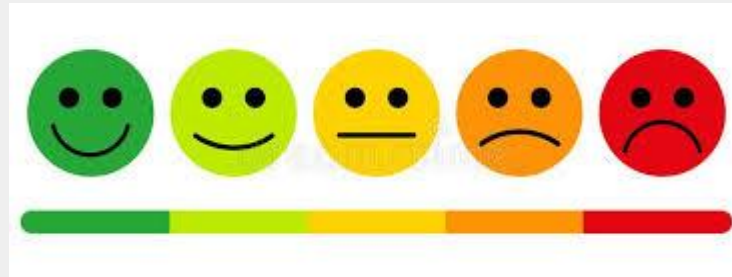
- Consistent breaks
- Slow rate of speech when explaining
- Shorter more explicit list of directions
- Wait time for questions!



## 4. EMOTION

Managing frustration and modulating emotions

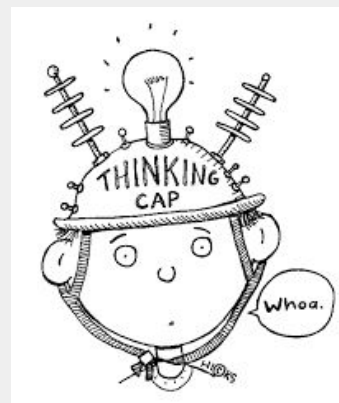
- Clear and consistent expectations for all
- Expected and unexpected actions
- Name what you are seeing, not what they are feeling.



# 5. MEMORY

Utilizing working memory and accessing recall

- Categories
- Word retrieval
- Oral rehearsal
- Vocabulary development



## 6. ACTION

Monitoring and self-regulating action

- Thinking about self and not others
- Recognize ability to do the task
- Recognize the ability to inhibit yourself from doing something other than the task



**The best advice I can**  
**give....**

**Don't do for your child what they  
can do for themselves.**

**(Even though it's so much easier!!)**

# Parting words from a Landmark student

**Ms. Arnio:** "I just want to make sure you all know that if you weren't really smart you wouldn't be at this school."

**Student:** "Do you know when I figured out I was smart? It wasn't when I had to do all of that testing because I couldn't really do it. It was because I got through all the years at my old school pretending that I knew what to do and pretending that I could read and the teachers never figured out that I couldn't. Then I got into Landmark and I knew I had outsmarted them all."



# Questions?



# Works Cited

Brown, Thomas E. (2008). *Executive Functions: Six Aspects of a Complex Syndrome*.  
[https://4ef3aff2-5373-4856-9ad9-0c5e21952d1f.filesusr.com/ugd/5180ef\\_b6568fd989ac4166aa9477d6dac3b2d2.pdf](https://4ef3aff2-5373-4856-9ad9-0c5e21952d1f.filesusr.com/ugd/5180ef_b6568fd989ac4166aa9477d6dac3b2d2.pdf)

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