

**Pre-K Family
Night:
Skyrocket
our
child to
success**



Tuesday,
February 1
5:30-7pm

Oak Grove
Primary PAC

Pizza will be
served at 5:30 pm

Activities for the entire
family begin at 6 pm.

Executive Functioning Skills to Skyrocket Your Child to Success



1. Planning & Prioritizing

- Make simple plans with a beginning, middle, & end
- Identify the end-goal of a plan or activity
- Follow-through with minimal adult guidance

How do we use these skills?

- Organize thoughts related to a task or activity
- Create a schedule
- Make a financial plan and follow through without impulsive purchases
- Break down homework into manageable chunks

How can you help your child with this skill?

- Give your child 3 step directions
Ex. Put on your coat, get your lunchbox, and meet me beside the door
- Break down large tasks and give one direction at a time
Ex. Clean your room:- 1. Pick up all the cars 2. Put your shoes in the closet.
3. Pick up the legos 4. Put your dirty clothes in the hamper
- Have your child make eye contact or acknowledge when you are giving directions
- Help your child practice making a packing list, giving directions, or writing a recipe
- Encourage your child to develop and tell stories
- Look at a recipe together, and gather ingredients and cooking utensils before you begin

2. Problem-Solving & Metacognition

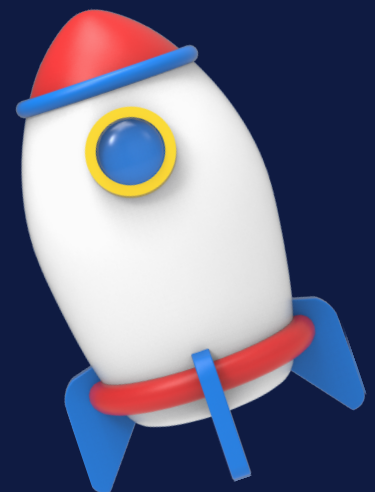
- Make minor adjustments to the strategy used to solve a problem
- Can briefly describe to others how they are solving a problem
- Can briefly describe their emotional state

How do we use these skills?

- Remain calm when rules or routines change
- Stay focused when switching from one task to another
- Self-monitor or keep track of what you are doing
- Identify and control your own emotions
- Recognize the emotions of others and respond appropriately
- Identify areas of weakness and make a plan to improve

How can you help your child with this skill?

- Play matching and sorting games with socks, clothes, rocks, coins, or utensils
- Complete increasingly complicated puzzles
- Play the emotions game by taking turns making faces in a mirror and try showing as many different emotions as you can
- Go on a scavenger hunt using a series of clues



3. Sustained Attention

- Independently complete simple tasks or chores
- Attend to others in a short activity
- Listen to an adult or peer read a short book

How do we use these skills?

- Pay attention to others in conversation
- Retain what you heard or read in a short book
- Follow directions or a sequence of steps and keep track of your belongings

How can you help your child with this skill?

- Read a short book before bedtime to practice listening
- Set the table before dinner
- Pick up toys
- Make the bed
- Put the clean dishes away
- Tell a group story (one person starts the story and the next person adds to it)
- Act out a story
- Play Freeze Dance (dance to the music until it stops and freeze)
- Play games: Red Light-Green Light, I Spy, Simon Says, or Hide & Seek

4. Goal-directed Persistence

- Try independently to solve a problem or achieve a goal more than once, with minimal frustration
- Ask for help from others

How do we use these skills?

- Ask a friend, neighbor, or co-worker for help to solve a problem or clarify instructions
- Keep going even in the face of obstacles
- Work through the most challenging part of a task

How can you help your child with this skill?

- Play games: Go Fish, Candyland, Musical Chairs
- Provide lots of opportunities for outdoor play and exploration
- Use a timer to help kids with starting a task
- Use breathing techniques (Star, Pretzel, Balloon) to minimize anger or frustration

Additional resources for problem solving, regulating emotions, and other behavioral skills may be found on the National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations website or by scanning this QR code.





Planning & Prioritizing (Star Relief Art)

Skills:

- **Make simple plans with a beginning, middle, and end**
- **Identify the end-goal of a plan or activity**
- **Follow-through with minimal adult guidance**

Suggested Skill Introduction: Planning and prioritizing skills are used to organize thoughts related to a task or activity by defining the plan to achieve the goal and the steps to get there. Think about your financial plan (monthly budget). Everyone loves a good sale but following through with your monthly budget is vital in order to achieve your long-term financial goals. Sometimes you get started with a plan or project and never quite make it to the end. Do you have an unfinished project around your home? You might start the project with great enthusiasm but get overwhelmed by the details so the project grinds to a screeching halt before you ever finish. The handout you receive will give you some ideas about how to work on these skills at home.

Introduce the Art activity, support families as needed, and ask the reflection questions to facilitate family discussion.

Art Activity: Star Relief Art

Materials: Plate for paint, sharpie* (to write name on back), masking tape, 10 x 10 canvas, rockets, stars cutouts, wipes*

**Paint/Plate should be replaced for each family. Wipe down or replace sharpies for each family.*

Suggested Activity Introduction: We have a special art activity tonight for your family. Please look at the finished art displayed here. Before you begin painting, we want you, as a family, to identify the end-goal of your activity and develop a plan for your project with a beginning, middle, and end.

Note: If you see a child/family is having difficulty getting started, give them a hint(s). Also, you may need to help some families verbalize a plan.

HINT (if needed): Look at the materials in front of you. How can you use these materials to make your own masterpiece?

Reflection:

- How many steps did you use to create your art?
- Was it more difficult to get started or to finish?
- Did you follow your original plan or did you have to change your plan along the way?
- What problems did you encounter? How did you solve those problem in order to finish your art?
- What activity could you plan for your family? (a family night, a special home project, a community service project, etc...) Talk about a plan for this project. What do you need to do first? What are the steps and what is the end goal?



Problem-Solving & Metacognition

Skills:

- **Make minor adjustments to the strategy used to solve a problem**
- **Can briefly describe to others how they are solving a problem**
- **Can briefly describe their emotional state**

Suggested Skill Introduction: We use problem-solving and metacognition skills all day. These skills help us make adjustments when plans change abruptly or when our others respond in an unexpected way. We can problem solve to work out conflict or make changes to a pre-made plan. We also use these skills to recognize our own emotions and help us respond appropriately. Sometimes we have to calm down before we can regroup and respond. I live with 3 teenagers and a husband, so there are many days when I just have to breathe before responding. My coping mechanism is to laugh when things are falling apart. That does not usually go over well (as you might imagine), so I'm working on reading others' faces and making sure my response is supportive.

Book Introduction Take and Work it Out: We are going to read a book together about how to solve problems. Look at the front cover. What are these children doing? What problems do you think they might have?

Materials: book for read-aloud (**Talk and Work it Out**), **We Can Be Problem Solvers At-Home** printed book, Home Solution Cards on a ring, Parent handout, Scenario Problem-Solving Cards

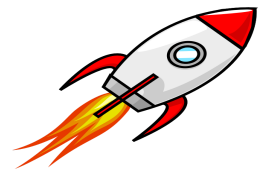
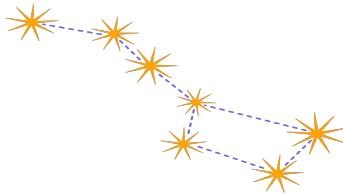
- Read the story, pointing out problems, solutions, and emotions as you read.
 - P. 6 “Take a break” card
 - P. 8-15 “Use kind words” card (to solve a problem)
 - P. 17 “Share” and “Wait and Take Turns” cards
 - P. 18-21 “Ask for Help” card

- Show the printed book We Can Be Problem Solvers at Home
Ask, “Do you ever have problems at home? How do you solve them?”

- Show the at-home solutions cards on the ring and give each family a set

- Use the scenario cards to help facilitate discussion and a family solution for each scenario

- Give each family a copy of the at-home book and the parent guide (one sheet)



Goal-Directed Persistence (Fine Motor Activities)

Skills:

- **Try independently to solve a problem or achieve a goal more than once, with minimal frustration**
- **Ask for help from others**

Suggested Skill Introduction: Goal-directed persistence skills are used to ask a friend, co-worker, or family member for help or to clarify instructions when we don't understand. We've all experienced obstacles which make it difficult to keep going, and these skills help us to keep-on-keeping on! Sometimes there is one part of a task or activity that is challenging and it can be hard to get past that point. Think of a complex math problem. You might want to stop when you get to the fractions or exponents, but with these skills you can take a deep breath, calm down, and finish the task. The handout you received has some ideas about how to practice these skills at home.

We have 3 activities for your family. In each activity there is a goal and you will work through obstacles to achieve the goal. Don't forget to ask for help if you need it too!

Introduce one game/activity, do the game/activity, ask the reflection questions (help facilitate discussion within the family) and then introduce the next activity. Note: Each family gets one of each activity pack.

Game/Activity One: Star Stacking (2 rounds)

Materials: timer, tweezers* (2), Erasers (2 bags of 20)*

****Items must be wiped down prior to being used by another family/group.***

- Turn the timer over, Use the tweezers to grab the erasers one at a time, and stack them on top of each other. Can you get them all stacked before time runs out?
- Reflection:
 - How many were you able to stack?
 - What made this task challenging?
 - What would you do differently next time?
- Have a star stacking race with a family member. Predict who you think will win.
- Reflection:
 - Who won the race?
 - Why do you think that person won?
 - Would you be willing to race this person again (even if you did not win)?

Game/Activity Two: Constellations

Materials: Constellation Cards (2), Bag of Marshmallows & Toothpicks*

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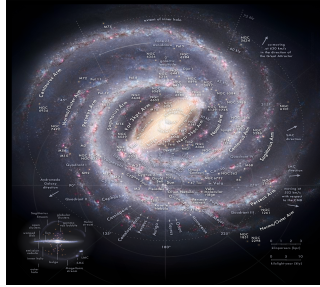
- Using the constellation cards as a guide, stick the toothpicks into the marshmallows to create constellations.
- Reflection:
 - Do your constellations look like the guide?
 - Which constellation was the easiest to make?
 - Which one was the most difficult?
 - Did you ask for help? Why or why not?

Game/Activity Three: Rockets

Materials: Tangram tiles, Rocket Guide (optional, see note)*

****Items must be wiped down prior to being used by another family/group.***

- Using the Tangram Tiles, create a rocket!
Note: If you see a child or family is having difficulty creating a rocket, ask them if they would like help. If so, give them a rocket card (as a model).
- Reflection:
 - How many tiles did you use to create your rocket?
 - Was this activity frustrating? Did you ever want to give up?
 - Do you think you could make a different rocket with the tiles?



Sustained Attention (Science)

Skills:

- **Independently complete a simple tasks or chores**
- **Pay attention to others in a short activity**
- **Listen to an adult or peer read a short book**

Suggested Skill Introduction: We use these skills to pay attention to others in conversation, retain what we have heard or read, follow directions, or complete a task using a sequence of steps. For example. When you are cooking a delicious dinner for your family, you have to refer to the recipe, use the correct ingredients, and follow the steps in order. If you don't, you may have something that's not very tasty! Your handout will give you some very practical ways to help your child at home.

Introduce the Science activity and materials, give step by step instructions for completing the experiment, and ask the reflection questions to facilitate family discussion.

Science Experiment: Magic Milky Way

Materials: Milk, foam cup with line for measuring, plastic plate*, droppers* and food coloring, q-tips*, and dish soap*

**Families should throw away used cups, plates, and q-tips. Droppers should be replaced for each family.*

Suggested Activity Introduction: There are several steps to our experiment. You will have to listen very closely as I give you each step. We have milk, measuring cups, food coloring, droppers, dish soap, and Q-tips to work with. Let's see if we can make the Milky Way galaxy. Do you know what the Milky Way is?

Experiment Steps:

- Step 1: Parents, you may have to help your child pour the milk into a foam cup up to the black line
- Step 2: Children, pour the milk into the plate
- Step 3: Parents, your child may need help with the dropper, but allow them to try. Put as many drops of food coloring on top of the milk as you'd like. Be careful not to disturb the milk.
- Step 4: Dip a q-tip into the dish soap and gently dab it onto the surface of the milk
- Step 5: Watch the magic!

Reflection:

- Why was it important to pay attention and follow directions during this activity?
- What would have happened if we had added the dish soap before we added the food coloring? Would our experiment have been successful?
- What might happen at home if you don't put toothpaste on your toothbrush before you brush your teeth?
- What happens if you don't put your favorite toy away when you're done playing with it? (Dog might eat it, it gets lost, etc...)
- What happens at school if you're not paying attention to the teacher at school when she reads a story? Are you able to answer her questions?