



WEST METRO
LEARNING CONNECTIONS, INC.

Developing Social Understanding & Skills Since 2001
Centers in Edina & Excelsior

Homework Helper

By Rachel Adamek, B.C.a.B.A and Senior ASD Support Specialist

Many students, neurotypical and otherwise, struggle with motivation to complete daily homework assignments. With executive functioning challenges, many students with autism have additional struggles when facing homework completion. Executive functioning skills help us to plan, organize, manage time, make decisions, control impulsivity, and shift between thoughts and ideas. Many of these skills are necessary to initiate and carry out complex tasks such as completing homework. However, there are strategies to help these students to develop successful homework habits.

Establishing a routine around when and where homework will be completed will set up predictable expectations. Educational specialists recommend starting homework at the same time every day as well as identifying a specific space in which homework will be completed. This space should be outfitted with all materials necessary for the student to complete his or her work, such as pencils, erasers, pens, markers, paper, graph paper, calculator, glue, scissors, dictionary, etc. To determine where the best place is to set up this area, identify a quiet area with minimal visual distractions. Ask your child where he or she likes to work and discuss the pros and cons of different locations. Decide together on an appropriate location. For students who are assigned long-term homework (i.e., projects or papers that will take multiple days or multiple weeks to complete), posting a calendar in the designated work space may aid in planning out those assignments so that the child does not put off the assignment until the last minute. In addition to determining a set location and time for homework completion, some children may benefit from a specific schedule or order in which to complete homework. It can be helpful to sandwich the most challenging subject with other less difficult ones. For example, if your child struggles in math but does better in reading and science the child could start with reading homework, followed by math homework, and finally science. Creating a homework contract can set the expectations for you and your

child and help everyone remain accountable for those expectations.

Not all students are intrinsically motivated to complete homework tasks in a timely and thorough manner. Developing an incentive system may promote improved work quality and increased time management skills. Incentive systems can be short-term or long-term systems, depending on what works best for the child and the parents implementing it.

Short-term incentive systems involve a pre-determined reinforcing activity or item (e.g., watching a television program, playing a preferred game with a parent or sibling, talking on the phone, having a preferred snack, etc.) and a clear expectation for earning that activity or item. Typically with short-term incentive systems, the child will earn the desired activity or item upon completion of the daily homework tasks.

Long-term incentive systems typically involve earning points in order to “buy” a big-ticket reinforcing activity or item (e.g., having a friend sleep over, going to a movie, choosing a restaurant to go to with the family, having pizza night, etc.). A structure of how points are earned can be developed together by the child and parents. For example, longer or more challenging assignments might earn 10 points while a shorter or easier assignment may be valued at 5 points. Getting input from the child creates a sense of ownership and buy-in which will make the incentive system more successful. Creating a menu of activities to purchase may keep the interest of the child longer than having one specific item or activity that is earned once the child reaches a specified number of points. With long-term incentive programs, typically a child will need to complete multiple days of homework tasks before cashing in for a desired activity or item.

Incentive programs can be wonderful tools to promote success and independence in homework completion. However, parents should not get discouraged if the first system put into place is not effective. Tweaks and adjustments will likely be necessary to work out any kinks that arise once your system is being implemented. Parents should also plan to make ongoing adjustments to their incentive systems as their child demonstrates success and progress with his or her homework. The best rule of thumb is to keep the expectations challenging yet attainable.

[Click here for a sample homework planner, incentive planning sheet & homework contract](#)



SOCIAL SKILLS THERAPY
HELPING KIDS FIT IN & SHINE

WMLC Summer Programming

Save your spot now... There is still time to register!

WMLC offers a continuum of social skills courses for preschool-age children through young adults. In addition to social skills groups we offer job coaching, tutoring, and a wide-range of fun therapeutic recreation activities throughout the summer.

WMLC is excited to expand our Camp Connections Day Camp by offering afternoons at WMLC Edina, in addition to our morning, afternoon, and full-day Camp Connections at WMLC Excelsior!

Academic tutoring is a great opportunity to help bridge gaps in learning in addition preventing summer learning loss. Our skilled tutors understand the learning process and how to address children's learning styles and learning difficulties. \$60/hr.

Summer Social Skills Term begins on Monday, June 16, 2014 and runs through Friday, August 15, 2014. Camp Connections runs from June 9 to August 21.

EDINA Location

[Click here to view the Summer EDINA Registration Form](#)

[Click here to view the EDINA day camp activity schedule](#)

EXCELSIOR Location

[Click here to view the Summer EXCELSIOR Registration Form](#)

[Click here to view the EXCELSIOR day camp activity schedule](#)

[Summer 2014 Catalog](#)

Click [here](#) to view the Summer Term Calendar

Contact Mary Wyatt for information regarding registration at mwyatt@wmlc.biz or 952-474-0227



Bold Connections

Saturday, May 3rd from 7:00pm to 9:00pm at WMLC Edina

This event is open to ages 16 and up.

WMLC's Bold Connections are a great way for teens age 16 and older to get together, kick back, and have a great time! These get togethers are designed to introduce teens to new friends and strengthen current relationships through age-typical activities with facilitation from highly experienced staff as needed. Bold Connections are held at WMLC Edina and may include an outing. Minimum enrollment is three participants. All are welcome, but advance registration is required.

Registration Deadline: Thursday, May 1, 2014 by 4:30pm

[View the Flyer](#)

[Click Here to Register](#)



Monthly WMLC Sleepover

Drop-off: Saturday, May 17, 2014 at 5:00pm

Pickup: Sunday, May 18, 2014 at 10:00am

Join us for a sleepover at **WMLC Excelsior**! Sleepovers are a great opportunity to enjoy some free time, build new relationships, and work on friendship skills in a natural, yet supported, environment. Dinner is usually served for the whole group around 6:30. After dinner, there is time for board games, video games, or a movie before lights out. In the morning, staff prepare breakfast and there is some more social time with friends after we pack up our things! (Ages 8+)

Outing Goals: Cooperative play skills and sportsmanlike conduct, verbal support to peers, reciprocal conversations relevant to activities, independence and responsibility.

Sleepover Cost: \$160

Items to Bring: Sleeping Bag, Pillow, Toothbrush

Optional Items to Bring: Games (electronic games are okay)

Registration Deadline: Thursday, May 15, 2014 by 4:30pm

[View the Flyer](#)

[Click Here to Register](#)



May Friday Open Social

Friday, May 30, 2014 from 5:00 to 9:00 at WMLC Edina

This event is open to children ages 8 and up.

WMLC's Friday Open Socials provide social opportunities to build and strengthen new and old friendships. Participants have a great time playing games and doing activities with peers in a structured environment. Social interactions and communication among peers is facilitated by our highly trained staff while playing games. This is a great opportunity to hang out with friends. Minimum enrollment is three participants. All are welcome, but advance registration is required.

Registration Deadline: Thursday, May 29, 2014 by 4:30pm

[View the Flyer](#)

[Click Here to Register](#)



WMLC Prom

Saturday, May 24, 2014 from 7:00 to 10:00pm at WMLC Edina

This event is open to ages 14 and up.

This year WMLC will be hosting our 2nd Annual Prom! It is a fabulous opportunity for individuals to socialize and have fun with peers.

Registration Deadline: Thursday, May 22, 2014 by 4:30pm

[View the Flyer](#)

[Click Here to Register](#)



Strategy Central

Saturday, May 3, 2014 from 10:00 to 11:30am at WMLC Excelsior

Thursday, May 8, 2014 from 6:00 to 7:30pm at WMLC Edina

WMLC is proud to offer Strategy Central Education Programs. These program are FREE. This month's topic is "Creating Positive Meal Times, One Bite at a Time." Specialists from Family Speech and Therapy Services will be presenting information to encourage food exploration and family mealtime support for children with feeding difficulties.

Mission: To provide an educational and support forum to parents of children identified with autism spectrum disorders and related social, emotional and behavioral needs.

Disclaimer: Strategy Central is not an advocacy group; it is a forum for support and education for parents and community members. WMLC works in harmony and collaboratively with schools and families.

Format: Strategy Central will include a presentation followed by question and discussion time. Presenters will vary based on the topic and needs of the group. Presenters could be a WMLC professional, an educator, a parent, a health care professional, or another professional with relevant expertise. Strategy Central welcomes and encourages parent input and will be seeking feedback on presentations, as well as ideas for future presentations.

[View the Flyer](#)

Excelsior - 5/3/14 *Please register by Thursday, May 1, 2014 by 4:30pm

[Click Here to Register](#)

Edina - 5/8/14 *Please register by Tuesday, May 6, 2014 by 4:30pm

[Click Here to Register](#)



Sensory Strategy

This month's sensory strategy describes the benefit of swinging. Prior to beginning many WMLC social skills classes, clients participate in a sensory start. During this time, staff provide a swing sequence (vestibular input) followed by some form of deep pressure (proprioceptive input). Children who find the swinging motion soothing, will relax and will benefit from increased concentration. The motion of swinging restores balance to the vestibular system, provides proprioceptive input and generally helps children with ASD feel more "in balance". An activity like swinging can help a person to calm and organize behavior by providing sensory input. Slowly swinging a child on a swing can sometimes help initiate speech (Ray, King, & Grandin, 1988). There are a wide variety of swings available such as hammock swings, platform swings, bolster swings, cuddle swings, etc.



App of the Month

The Difficult Situations Fun Deck allows caregivers an opportunity to understand their child's current level of problem solving skills when faced with a stressful situation. This allows caregivers to help teach their child how to react and solve problems in a variety of stressful situations, such as dealing with a bully. This app brings up topics of safety, emotions, and different ways of acting in response to events that might occur. This app also helps to improve reasoning, inferencing, sequencing, and memory skills!

Click for
More Information



"Like us" on Facebook during the months of May and June for

your chance to WIN a \$10 Caribou gift card!

"Liking us" on Facebook will allow you to receive current WMLC news, event updates, photos, posts and more!



Facebook Website

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952-474-0227

Better Business Bureau



BBB
Rating: A+

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Review

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