

# **Getting Complex Learners Ready to Learn for Success in the Classroom.**

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## Learning Objectives

1

### Getting Ready to Learn

Discuss the foundational skills required for learning

2

### Teaching Complex Learners

Achieving a learning ready state through differentiation

3

### Implementation

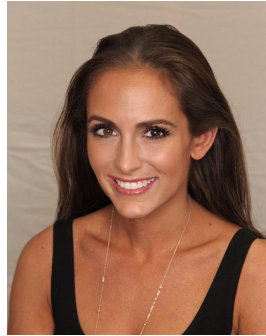
Discuss helpful tools, strategies and resources

## Introductions



**Kelly McDonald**

Occupational Therapist



**Kristyn Sequeira**

Speech & Language  
Pathologist



**Leah Valentine**

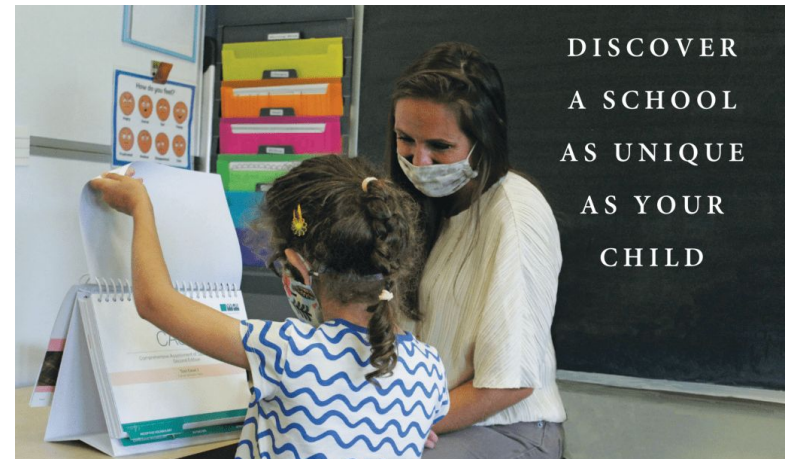
Special Educator

# The Wolf School

An independent, special education school.  
Our curriculum encompasses a rigorous blend of academic subjects and intensive therapeutic support that addresses three major learning challenges:

- Language processing/production
- Sensory regulation
- Socially effective communication

The Wolf School's Immersion Model© integrates therapeutic support within the entire curriculum throughout the day in each classroom.





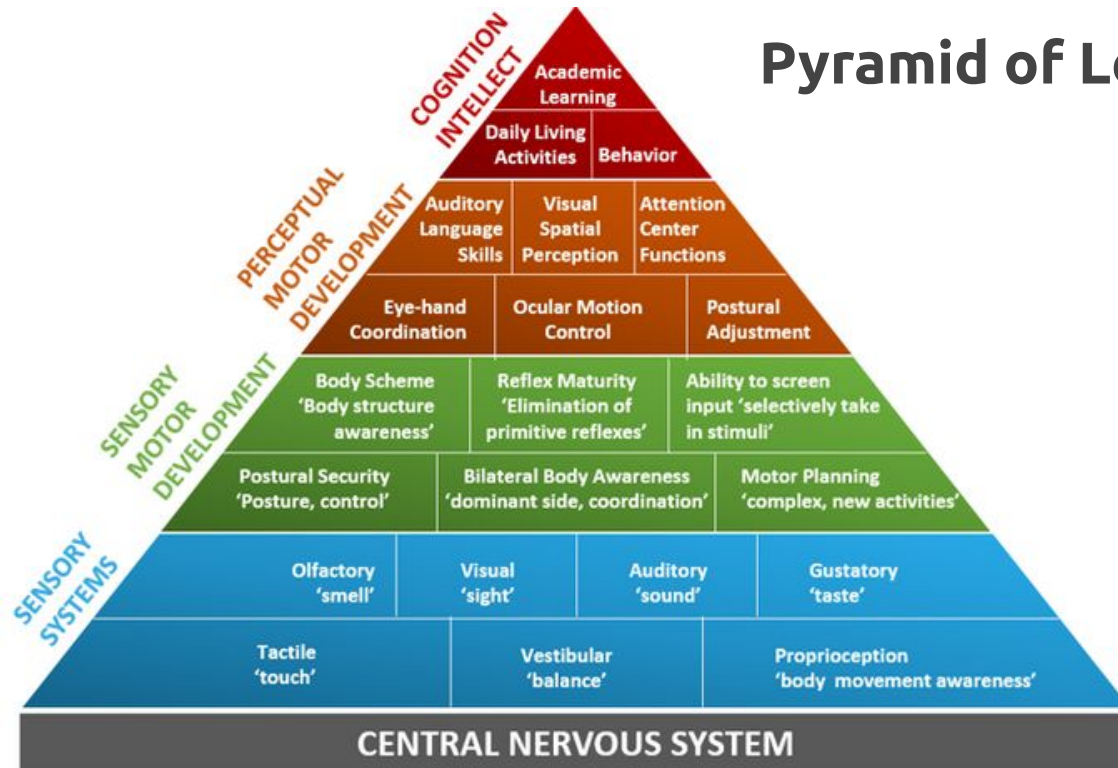


# Getting Ready to Learn



Foundational skills required for academic success

# Pyramid of Learning



Adapted from Pyramid of Learning (Williams & Shellenberger, 1-4)

# Movement in the Classroom

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**Benefits:** Movement wakes up the brain!

- ❖ Organizes the nervous system
- ❖ Increases alertness, attention and focus
- ❖ Tells us where our bodies are in space
- ❖ Activates and strengthens muscle tone
- ❖ Improves visual skills
- ❖ Promotes emotional wellbeing
- ❖ Makes learning fun!



# Types of Movement that Support Learning

## Heavy work

- Calming and organizing
- Pull, push, climb, jump, lift

## Crossing Midline

- Syncs both sides of the brain
- Required for reading/writing

## Vestibular

- Changing head position
- Get out of the “upright”

## Endurance

- Increasing your heart rate
- Can improve memory & focus

## Nature

- “Nature deficits”
- Free play outside is the most powerful type of movement



# Movement in the Classroom



## Make time for movement:

- Schedule movement breaks
- Create movement based activities
- Gym class and recess are essential
- Incorporate relaxation and rest time

## Important Tips:

- Provide structure - beginning / ending
- Make it purposeful
- Have boundaries and rules
- End movement with a cool down

## Movement in Academic Lessons

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- Keep it simple - maintain focus of academic skills
  - Move before seated tasks
  - Take movement breaks
  - Change the child's position
  - Make it part of the routine
  - Use manipulatives
  - Make it multi-sensory





# Who said learning has to happen in a chair?



**Keep it simple. It's not all about the "stuff".**





## Learn by doing.



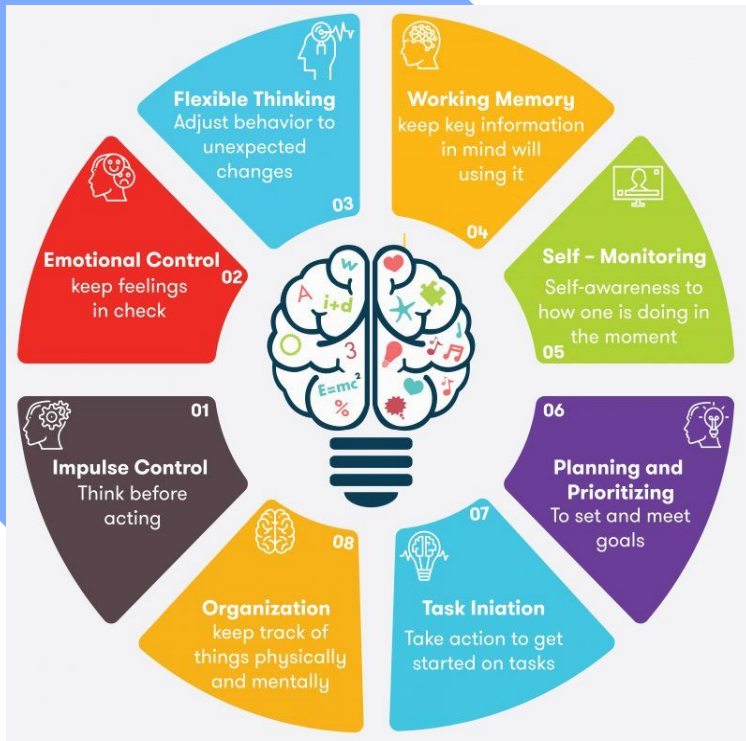
## Learning should be a multi-sensory experience!



## Movement makes learning fun!





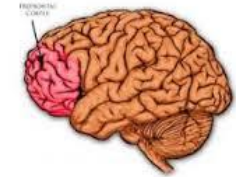


# Executive Functioning

Foundational skills required for academic success

## How Executive Dysfunction Presents in the Classroom

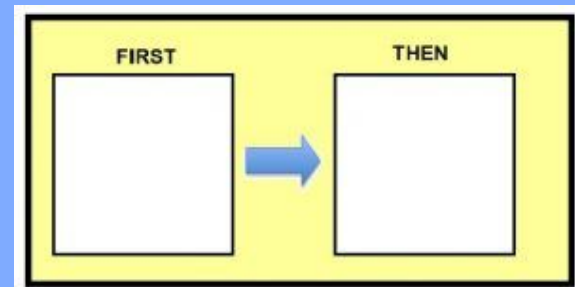
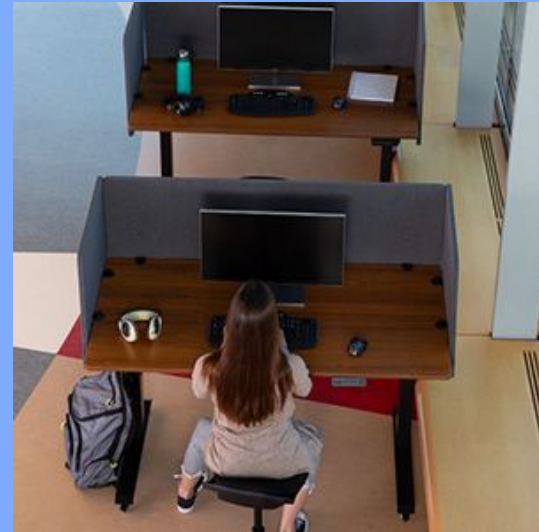
- ❖ Children with executive dysfunction can be seen as non-compliant or poor listeners
- ❖ Often present as inattentive
- ❖ Struggle with initiating tasks due to feeling overwhelmed
- ❖ Lack self inhibition and self regulation
- ❖ Rigid thinkers
- ❖ Poor working memory
- ❖ Difficulty with time management and organization



# Classroom Accommodations

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- Clearly define goals and expectations
- Step-by-step instructions with check boxes
- Repetition, repetition, repetition!!!
- Chunk information
- Provide routine, structure, and consistency
- Have child repeat information back to you
- Eliminate distractions



## Strategies to Improve Executive Function

- Decrease amount of language
- Provide a visual of what “ready” looks like
- Allow child to make prediction of what they will look like
- Encourage self-talk



## What “Ready” Looks Like

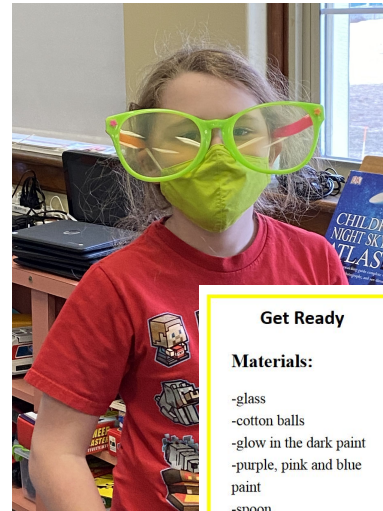
- Say to student “match the picture”
- Use gestural cues
- Eliminate the language/steps for kids with weak working memory and slow processing of language





## Visualize for Future Planning

- ★ Children with EF weakness haven't yet developed the ability to visualize the future
- ★ Wear “future glasses” to help visualize what they will look like initiating, executing and completing a task
- ★ Ask child to imagine the work “done” instead of getting ready first
- ★ Get Ready, Do, Done



### Get Ready

#### Materials:

- glass
- cotton balls
- glow in the dark paint
- purple, pink and blue paint
- spoon
- glitter

### Do

1. Make swirls of glow in the dark paint around jar.
2. Pour water to second line
3. Add a few drops of colored paint
4. Stretch cotton balls apart, then put in jar
5. Add glitter
6. Add glow in the dark paint
7. Repeat steps 1-

### Done

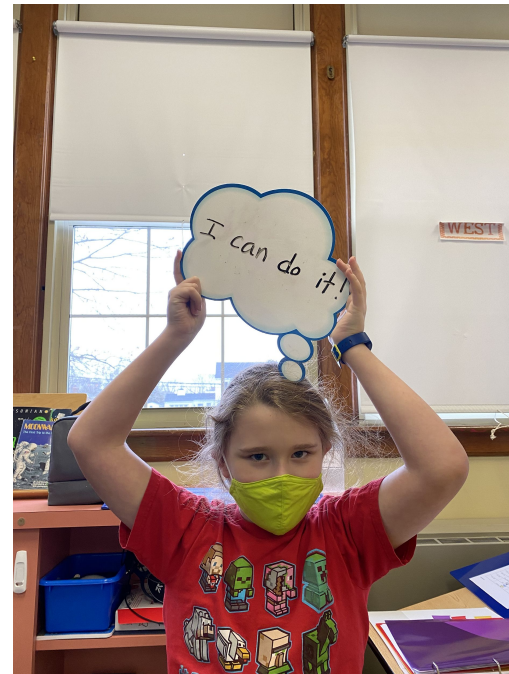


### Get Done

When it's night time, watch the galaxy glow!

## Social Thinking Language

1. Encourage flexible thinking
2. Use positive self-talk
3. Visualize themselves in the future being successful
4. Visuals!!



## It all comes back to play!

- Gross motor activities promote a natural progression of executive function skills
- Develop social skills and schemas
- Problem solving and conflict resolution
- Promotes organizational skills





# Teaching Complex Learners



Achieving a learning ready state through differentiation

## Recipe for Success

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- Predictable schedule
- Preview
- Provide visual supports
- Help manage time and organization
- Teach flexibility and Growth Mindset
- Create multi-sensory experiences
- Achieve a learning ready state



# Differentiated Instruction - Learner #1

## **Student Description**

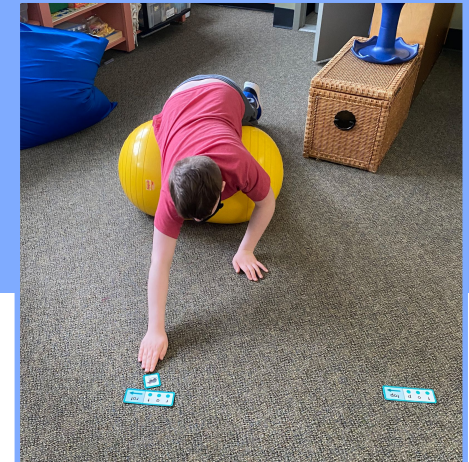
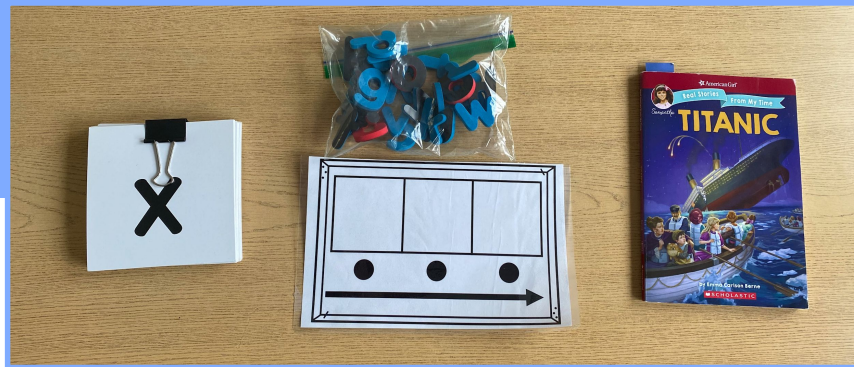
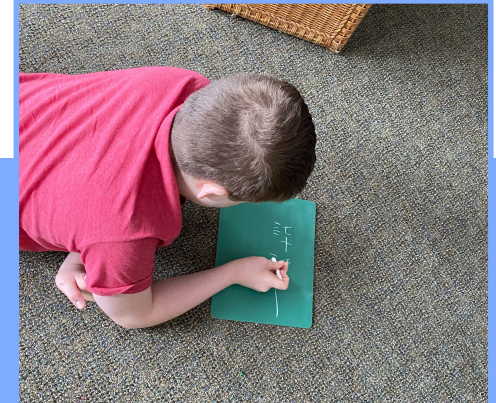
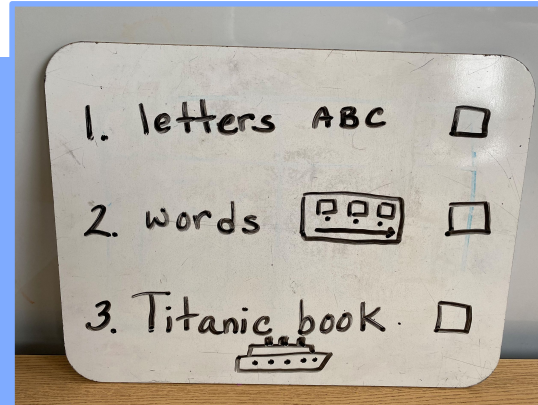
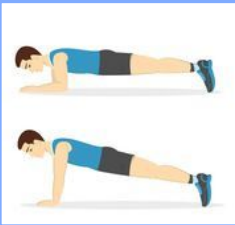
- Sensory processing disorder
  - sensory seeker
- Difficulty attending
  - distracted by his surroundings
- Difficulty with impulse control
- Academics are very challenging
  - avoidance / refusal
- Has high interest areas / preferred topics
- Loves to be silly

## **What gets him reading?**

- Heavy work and change of head position before and/or during lesson
- Specific lesson visual checklist with last item preferred
- Use different locations in the room during the lesson
- Multi-sensory teaching
- High interest topics



# Differentiated Instruction - Learner #1



## Differentiated Instruction - Learner #2

### Student Description

- Internally and externally distracted
- Often off topic comments and conversation
- Difficulty with sustained attention
- Highly anxious
- Overwhelmed by academic assignments
- Shut down / refusal when confused
- Fine motor delays
- Difficulty with visual perception

### What gets her engaged in math?

- Match the picture
- Use of visuals - less language
- Lesson checklist or first / then
- Dividers to reduce visual stimuli
- Break Visual
- Use of rhythm
- Limited visual information on pages
- Highlighted or defined boundaries to write within
- Manipulatives for kinesthetic learning



## Differentiated Instruction - Learner #2



## Differentiated Instruction - Learner #3

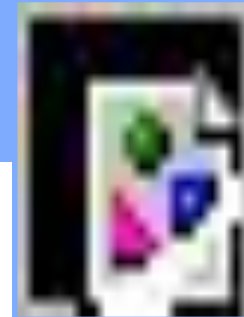
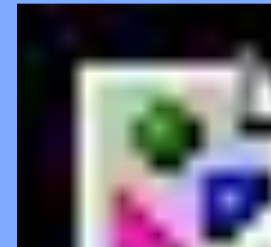
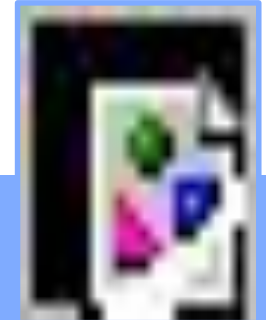
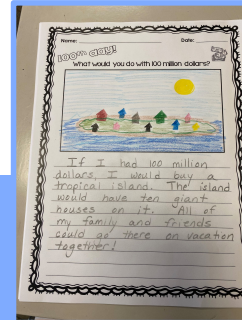
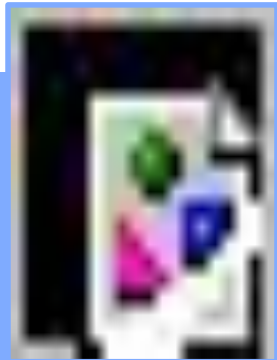
### Student Description

- Active sensory seeking and avoiding
- Difficulty attending - internally distracted
- Very strong reading and math skills
- Difficulty with writing
  - Delayed fine and visual motor skills
- Difficulty spelling
- Difficulty generating ideas
  - concrete thinker
- Avoids writing - "I can't"
- Gets stuck and becomes frustrated, angry, has outbursts

### What gets him writing?

- Heavy work and deep pressure before lesson
- Fine motor warm up
- Slant board
- Growth mindset strategies
- Lesson checklist
- What done looks like
- Explicitly taught and practiced strategies available and encouraged
- Break visual

# Differentiated Instruction - Learner #3





# Implementation



Tools, strategies and resources



# Getting Ready to Learn



## SUGGESTED TOOLS

- Bean bag chair
- Fidgets
- Exercise ball
- Scooter board
- Swing (indoor or outdoor)
- Yoga mat
- Play-Doh or resistive therapeutty
- Individual dry erase boards

## STRATEGIES

- Structure - clear beginning and ending
- Make it purposeful
- Include cool down/relaxation/breathing
- Use rhythm
- Change head position
- Cross midline
- Heavy work
- Change physical positioning
- Make learning hands-on and multi-sensory



# Resources

*\* Links are embedded \**



## MOVEMENT

- **Websites:**
  - [The Zones of Regulation](#)
  - [Kids Yoga Stories](#)
  - YouTube Channels:
    - [Cosmic Kids Yoga](#)
    - [The Learning Station](#)
    - [Jack Hartmann](#)
    - [Get Kids Moving](#)
    - [The Body Coach TV](#)
    - [Chair exercises PE Bowman](#)
    - [Kid Mindfulness](#)
- **Books:**
  - [Spark - John Ratey](#)
  - [Out of Sync Child - Carol Kranowitz](#)
- **Apps:**
  - [Make Dice Lite](#)
  - [The Metronome](#)
  - [Sworkit Kids](#)

## EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING

- **Websites:**
  - [Sarah Ward - Cognitive Connections](#)
  - [Jill Kuzma](#)
  - [SMARTS program](#)
  - [Brain Talk curriculum](#)
- **Books:**
  - [Smart but Scattered - Peg Dawson](#)
  - [Bright Kids Who Can't Keep Up - Ellen Braaten PhD., Brian Willoughby PhD.](#)
  - [The Explosive Child - Dr. Ross W. Greene](#)
- **Apps:**
  - [Lumosity](#)
  - [Quizlet](#)
  - [Planning 30/30](#)
  - [360 Thinking Time Tracker](#)
- **Games:**
  - [Imaginiff Jr.](#)
  - [Stare Jr.](#)
  - [Charades for Kids](#)

## ACADEMIC

- **Websites:**
  - [Understood.org](#)
  - [The World of Complex Learners](#)
  - [LD @ School](#)
  - [Conscious Discipline](#)
  - [Mindset Works](#)
- **Books:**
  - [Mindset: New Psychology of Success - Carol Dweck](#)
- **Apps / Extensions:**
  - [SnapType](#)
  - [Visual Schedule Planner](#)
  - [Epic](#)
  - [Bookshare](#)
  - [Co:Writer](#)
  - [Read & Write](#)
  - [Kami](#)

# Questions / Comments?



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