



Goosehill Primary School

Weekly Notes-February 3, 2017



Dear Parents,

One of our District Parent Groups (SEPTA) is sponsoring an important workshop for parents on Tuesday at 9:30 here at Goosehill. The topic is **Executive Function Skills—Ways to Help Your Child Succeed in the Classroom**. It promises to be an interesting and informative presentation. If you would like to attend, please **RSVP today by emailing cshsepta@yahoo.com**.

Executive function skills are important life skills! They involve one's ability to plan, focus attention, remember instructions, organize materials, control responses, and juggle multiple tasks successfully. These brain functions can be compared to the job of an air traffic controller. An air traffic controller has to manage arrivals and departures on multiple runways while being able to filter out distractions, prioritize, manage lots of information, and control his/her own impulses. (Sounds a little like parenting! 😊)

Examples of executive function skills in the school setting include remembering to raise one's hand rather than blurting out an answer in class, being able to retain and follow through on a task that involves multiple steps, organizing one's materials, and persevering even when the work is challenging. It also involves the ability to take *metamoments*---calming oneself to avoid acting out in anger or frustration.

Young children can develop these skills with the ongoing modeling and support of adults. Our teachers teach their students to set goals, plan and strategize to solve problems, gather and organize materials, pay attention to details, tune out distractions, and control their responses. You can support your child's ability to do these things at home too. Here are some ideas:

- Give your child multi-step instructions. Start with two steps and increase to more as s/he becomes more able. (e.g. "*Put your backpack in the kitchen, get your pajamas on, and then choose a book.*")
- Involve your child in planning and making decisions about things such as what to pack for lunch or what to wear to school. Look at the school menu together and talk about the choices. If lunch will be packed, plan the "menu" together. When planning an outfit for the next day, allow your child to make simple choices from a set of options you are prepared to accept. Talk about the consequences of each choice. (e.g. "*If you choose to wear shorts, you may be cold at recess.*")
- Teach your child to take responsibility for simple household chores, such as setting and clearing the table and putting away his/her toys.
- Give your child time for imaginative play and help him/her act out problems and scenarios. Imaginative play involves planning, experimenting, building, and problem-solving. Through play, children can also express feelings and learn to respond to the actions and feelings of others.
- Keep your child active. Physical activity and sports increase body awareness and control. Think about the planning and strategizing it takes to climb a tree! Sports activities help children learn and remember rules, follow instructions, and give them opportunities to control their emotions.

I am sure you will learn much more at Tuesday's workshop. I hope to see you there!

Warm regards,

Lynn Herschlein

