



## Institute on Executive Functioning™

### Tips to Help Elementary Students Prepare for the New School Year

Another school year is here! Are you excited about the start of school, worried about the start of school, or somewhere in between? You may be excited to see your friends and meet new friends, or to learn new things. You may also be feeling stressed or worried about possibly repeating some difficulties that you experienced in past years. Some of these difficulties might be learning new skills and information, having to remember what you read, putting the ideas you have in writing, remembering math facts and processes, following rules and procedures, trying something new, accepting change, or interacting with peers and teachers in an acceptable way. These things are known as executive function skills. We call them EF skills. Having a problem with EF skills can cause you to not feel comfortable in school. Relax, there are ways to improve those skills.

#### **Tip #1: Identify the source of your stress such as in concerns. Is it?...**

- Remembering all the rules and procedures you need to follow.
- Remembering all the information you need to know.
- Completing your homework and still finding some time to do the things you want to do.
- Getting along with peers and making friends.
- Trying something new.
- Accepting change.
- Something else?

#### **Tip #2: Take action to help yourself remember things, get organized, make a plan, think change, and schedule your time. (Working Memory, Organization and Planning, Time Management).**

- Keep up assignments by using flash cards, apps, etc. to review material.
- Make lists to follow to help you remember what you need to do and when you need to do it. Check off those items you complete, and you will find you are making more progress than you thought.
- Keep your backpack organized so that you can find the homework you completed or the materials you need for class.
- Record your assignments and other things that need to be completed.

#### **Tip #3: Broaden your circle of friends (Peer Relations)**

- Join after school activities to meet friends.
- Think about conversation starters to use with new friends.
- Remember it is not the number of friends, but the quality of friendships.
- When assigned to groups, participate fully, give others the opportunity to talk, and let them know that you appreciate their contributions.