



Institute on Executive Functioning™

Tips to Help Secondary Students to Prepare for the Opening Day of School

You may be super excited about the start of school, apprehensive about the start of school, or somewhere in between. If you are too stressed about the start of school, you are using valuable energy you can best use elsewhere. Sometimes challenges with executive function skills (EF) cause you to have a more difficult time learning, following rules and procedures, making friends, and/or trying something new and accepting change in a flexible manner, thus causing stress. There are ways to improve those skills.

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

- Remembering all the information you need to learn and knowing what procedures to follow.
- Managing your time to do everything required and still find some time to do the things you want to do.
- Getting along with peers and making friends.
- Trying something new.
- Accepting change and the need to be flexible.
- Something else?

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

- Taking several courses and meeting the requirements of each course can put you into overload mode, so determine how to prioritize these requirements.
- Keeping up with the demands of several courses can seem overwhelming, so use flash cards, apps, etc. to review material.
- Make certain you have lists to follow. Check off those items you complete, and you will find you are making more progress than you thought.
- Keep everything organized so that you can find the homework you completed or the right notebook for the class in which you are sitting.
- Record your assignments and other things that need to be completed by a specific date using an app such as Can Due or a planner.

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

- Resolve to join interesting organizations, teams, etc. to meet more like - minded 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 study groups, participate fully, give others the opportunity to contribute, and notably appreciate others' contributions.