

# Cerebrate.

## | Case Study

### Challenges

Jacob is a gifted student, but he struggled to maintain good grades due to not completing his assignments. He was evaluated using the Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function® (Brief 2). Jacob's Brief 2 assessment showed that working memory, planning, and organization were scored as being clinically elevated. Areas of high concern were related to planning ahead for school assignments, carrying out the tasks that are needed to reach goals, and having trouble concentrating on tasks and schoolwork. Other areas of concern were keeping his assignments

### Working Memory Solution

Jacob was having a difficult time paying attention, and he lost focus on tasks easily. He shared how this challenge affected his schoolwork and impacted his grades.

The Cerebrate lessons **On Task List** and **Stay on Task** helped Jacob develop strategies to stay focused like setting timers, creating a homework schedule, and prioritizing when he has more work than normal. He implemented a strategy to write down each of his tasks to help him remember what he needed to complete. With the lesson **Pay**

### Cerebrate Lessons

On Task List  
Stay on Task  
Pay Attention



### Jacob - 7th grade

Jacob is a 7th grade student with very deep thoughts. When Jacob is not playing Minecraft video games, he loves taking his dog for walks to the park with his family.

organized and knowing where to start. With these key executive function challenges identified, Jacob was given specific Cerebrate lessons to empower him with strategies for increased learning success.



*I'm always impressed by Jacob's quick wit, but he has had a hard time getting his work in. When Jacob put in the extra effort and worked hard to pay attention and follow his plan to complete his work, he was so excited about his accomplishments. It was rewarding to see Jacob's defeat turn into pride in himself." -Jacob's Teacher*

**Attention**, he also learned how to determine whether he was paying attention so he knew when he needed to utilize his new strategies to get back on track. Jacob began to see how keeping himself focused will help him stay up to date on his schoolwork.

Jacob originally struggled to pay attention and focus on the work in front of him. By learning how to identify his behaviors when he was not paying attention, he is now able to choose strategies to focus, remember what he needs to finish, and complete his work on time.

# Task Initiation Solution

Jacob struggled to get started and keep focused to finish his work, and his overwhelm at the amount of work to complete often causes him to shut down.

With the Cerebrate lessons **Rewarding Yourself**, **Get Focused** and **Breaking It Down**, Jacob learned how to break his large assignments into smaller pieces. He incorporated small rewards for himself after completing each attainable goal. Jacob realized how much simpler it feels to get started when he has several smaller tasks instead of a couple larger ones. He also learned questions to ask himself to determine his level of engagement to help stay focused on completing his work.

# Organization Solution

Jacob was having a challenging time managing his priorities. He shared that having multiple assignments was scary to him because he didn't know where to start or in which order to complete them.

The Cerebrate lessons **Make a Plan** gave Jacob a way to organize the tasks he needed to complete so he had a big picture of his work. He learned how to look at everything on his list and choose what needed to be finished first and what could wait with the lesson **Prioritize It**. He recognized that his top priority was to address any missing assignments that were causing him to lose credit. Finally, the lesson **Get It Done** showed Jacob how to use his motivator of earning screen time to help keep him on track to finish his work.

Jacob initially had a difficult time knowing where to start and how to order his workload. After learning

## Cerebrate Lessons

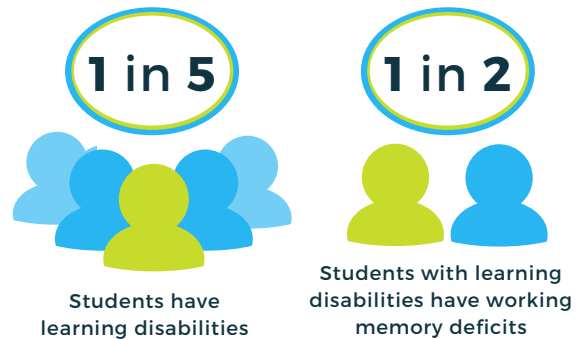
Rewarding Yourself

Get Focused

Breaking It Down



Initially, Jacob struggled to get started despite his feelings of overwhelm. After learning how to make the work more manageable by breaking it into smaller pieces, he can now manage his stress. He is also able to get started on his assignments because he has a plan that includes attainable goals and rewards, and he can identify when he is no longer engaged so he can adjust his plan and still finish his work.



Working Memory Deficits increase risk for low achievement by:



Students need to learn working memory strategies to improve their opportunities for academic success.

## Cerebrate Lessons

Make a Plan

Prioritize It

Get It Done



ways to organize his assignments by importance and creating incentives to finish them, Jacob can identify what assignments he should complete first and then stay on task to completion. He is also able to calm himself down when he gets overwhelmed about his schoolwork by looking at his list of tasks and prioritizing them.

# Impact of Change

Using Cerebrate lessons, Jacob learned strategies to pay attention to what he was working on, get started and stay focused on tasks, and manage his priorities to keep on track. Learning how to recognize when he was no longer paying attention and then regain focus will help him complete his work and feel less stressed. Jacob's new skill of chunking his work to make it simpler to get started on what he needs to do gives him the ability to work more efficiently, as he doesn't spend as much time trying to avoid his work. Prioritizing his tasks helps Jacob organize his workload so he can manage his assignments and turn them in for credit, which in turn gives him the independence he craves. The executive function skills Jacob has learned will help him realize what he is capable of achieving as he continues to see the success of his efforts.



Executive function skills make it possible to pay attention, keep relevant information in mind, reflect on that information and consider it relative to past knowledge and future goals, inhibit old ways of responding, and flexibly consider new interpretations. These skills are obviously essential for learning and problem solving, and research on EF has established clearly that individual differences in EF are related to school readiness and academic achievement, both concurrently and prospectively, even after controlling for intelligence and prior knowledge.

**Zelazo, P.D., Blair, C.B., and Willoughby, M.T. (2016). Executive Function: Implications for Education (NCER 2017-2000) Washington, DC: National Center for Education Research, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.**

## Cerebrate

Cerebrate is an executive function system that combines an evaluation tool with a customized curriculum to target instruction for students' needs. The evaluation measures the frequency of 64 observable behaviors that point to executive function deficiencies, and it can be administered as needed to monitor progress towards defined goals. The curriculum is comprehensive and provides instruction for the development of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive executive functions, including self-control, self-monitor, flexibility, emotional control, task initiation, working memory, planning, and organization. The lessons incorporate the best practices of executive function instruction, according to the leading research in the field. To learn more, go to [www.cerebrate.education](http://www.cerebrate.education) for additional information regarding the Cerebrate program.