

# Cerebrate.

## | Case Study

### Challenges

Kya is a bright and outgoing student. However, she struggled with adjusting to school tasks and situations which often made her school day more challenging. She was evaluated using the Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function® (BRIEF2). The results showed clinically elevated ranges in the areas of flexibility, planning, and task initiation. Specific areas of concern included having trouble accepting different ways to solve problems, getting stuck on one topic or activity, and becoming upset with new situations. Kya completed a self-assessment and marked herself as struggling in planning, prioritizing activities, and carrying out

### Flexibility Solutions

Kya had difficulty transitioning to different tasks and situations. She shared that it made her uncomfortable when transitions were abrupt, and she would get very upset.

The Cerebrate lessons **My Transitions** and **Transition Tools** helped Kya learn flexibility strategies. Kya worked to identify what factors make her upset when transitioning and how she can reduce the negative feelings she experiences. She reviewed different strategies for making more successful transitions to see which ones might help her. She practiced making transitions and paired each transition with a positive action, and she

### Kya -11th grade

Kya is an 11th grader who is taking several honors courses. Kya has a big family, and she loves to play games with her brothers when she is not busy with her school's competitive cheer team.

the actions needed to reach goals. With these key executive function challenges identified, Kya was taught specific Cerebrate lessons to empower her with strategies for increased learning success.



**Kya is now able to juggle more responsibilities with success! Learning to plan her week and break apart large tasks has resulted in Kya completing her work more efficiently. Kya can manage and complete schoolwork in a timely manner, allowing her to focus on other goals and responsibilities. I have seen an increase in both self-confidence and self-actualization." -Kya's Teacher**

discussed how this created a positive connection when she needed to transition. Finally, she created a plan for making her daily transitions with less upset and frustration.

Prior to completing the Cerebrate lessons, transitions were very challenging for Kya. After learning and practicing new strategies to handle situations differently, she can associate transition times with positive actions. She can also use strategies she has learned to create more peaceful transitions throughout her days.

### Cerebrate Lessons

My Transitions  
Transitional Tools



## Planning Solution

Kya struggled to manage her work and accomplish long-term goals. She mentioned that she struggled to come up with a system that worked for her.

Kya completed the Cerebrate lessons **Routines** and **My Habit Goal** to help her better plan out her workload. She decided to use a planner to keep track of the work that she needed to be doing, and she learned the importance of opening her planner every time she started homework so that it would become a habit. The lesson **SMART Goals** helped her start using a process to track her progress on the larger goals that she set for herself. Kya expressed that she was getting overwhelmed with the list of work in her planner, and she created a system to organize and prioritize what assignments should be done first.

## Task Initiation Solution

Kya struggled to begin her work. She explained that when she starts her work, sometimes she begins to feel panicked and overwhelmed.

The Cerebrate lessons **Get Started** helped Kya learn strategies to stop procrastinating. She journaled about how she began to feel panic when she needed to start her work, and she identified ways to decrease these feelings and get calm enough to begin. She shared how the overwhelming feelings keep her from doing her work, and she learned how to break down larger assignments in the lesson **Task Chunking**. She realized how creating smaller steps made her feel calmer, and she shared that she was even able to teach her brother how to use task chunking to prepare for finals.

At first, Kya had a really challenging time starting her work because it was overwhelming to her. After

### Cerebrate Lessons

Routines

My Habit Goal

SMART Goals



Initially, Kya was unable to manage her workload and effectively organize her tasks. After learning to use her planner, prioritize her work and create SMART goals for herself, she has developed a habit of using her planner every day to keep track of her assignments and upcoming due dates. Kya can now track her goals and analyze the progress that she has made.

### Recent Studies Show:

87%

Students struggle with procrastination that affects their academics

79%

Students suffer from significant stress related to their schoolwork

60%

Students have test anxiety that interferes with their performance

To achieve academic success, students need skills to overcome planning, task initiation, and emotional control challenges.

learning to chunk her assignments and stop procrastinating, she is able to get started on her work and finish on time.

### Cerebrate Lessons

Get Started

Task Chunking



# Impact of Change

Using Cerebrate lessons, Kya was able to learn strategies to transition easily to new situations, manage her work to meet goals, and begin her work with ease. Being able to transition successfully will help Kya feel less anxious about school, where she experiences several very abrupt transitions every day. Kya's new skill of creating systems to manage her work gives Kya a plan for reaching her academic and personal goals with less stress. Her ability to start tasks despite feeling overwhelmed provides Kya with more self-discipline to get her work finished efficiently. The executive function skills Kya has learned will help her feel more accomplished and confident in her abilities to be a strong, independent learner.



Research has shown clearly that executive function skills can be improved by relatively brief interventions that provide children with opportunities to practice their developing EF skills at increasing levels of challenge. Overall, research suggests that EF provides a foundation for learning and adaptation in a wide range of circumstances, including school. This research indicates that the EF skills needed to pay attention, keep information in mind, think flexibly, and inhibit impulsive responding can be acquired in school settings, leading not only to improved EF but also to improved academic achievement.

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.