



SMARTS@Home

SMARTS—SUCCESS, MOTIVATION, AWARENESS, RESILIENCE, TALENTS, SUCCESS—is a web-based curriculum designed to help teachers create a school culture that celebrates students’ use of executive function strategies to overcome challenges and reach their goals, both in school and in life. CHADD honored SMARTS as the Innovative Program of the Year in 2018.

The evidence-based program has grown exponentially over the years, and is now serving over 275,000 students, 2,350 schools, and 7,500 educators both nationally and internationally. While SMARTS can help all students learn to effectively use executive function strategies, it appears particularly helpful to those with attention and executive function challenges.

Educators familiar with the benefits of SMARTS in their classrooms will be pleased to learn that the program has recently expanded its reach to include families. SMARTS@Home draws upon the same evidence-based tools to help parents help their elementary-aged children master a host of executive function strategies designed to improve organization, time management, and other areas affected by EF deficits. SMARTS@Home was created by the Research Institute for Learning and Development. The institute’s mission, under the direction of Lynn Meltzer, PhD, is to transform the lives of children, adolescents, and adults who struggle with learning differences.

Some parents may not feel best prepared to implement SMARTS@Home with their child. Fortunately, the program can also be implemented by other adults in the child’s life, including grandparents, extended family members, caregivers, ADHD coaches, or tutors. Parents and children can then celebrate together all the gains the child is making in learning to use executive function strategies throughout the course of their day.

A brief overview

Within the course of six units, SMARTS@Home is designed to boost a child’s self-understanding of executive functions, including what it means to be strategic in approaching challenges at school and beyond. The child is then shown how to explicitly use this foundation for setting goals, organizing materials, managing time, and regulating behavior.

While the recommendation is that families focus on each unit for one month, some children will benefit from more time to master the material. Each unit provides a certificate to celebrate its successful completion. The six units include:

1. How do I think about my thinking?
2. How can I use strategies to help me?

3. How do I think flexibly?
4. I CAN DO my goals (Clear, Appropriate, Numerical, Doable, Obstacles)
5. How do I organize my materials?
6. How do I understand time?

Each unit includes four lessons, each about thirty minutes in length, that are intended to be completed in the order presented. The lessons are followed by “extensions,” where the child is encouraged to practice strategies in real-life situations. The lessons also include a “bridge letter” to share with other important caregivers (grandparents, teachers, coaches, etc.) the skills the child is working on and how they too can celebrate and reinforce them.

Each SMARTS@Home lesson includes an instruction and wrap-up video, semi-scripted directions for the parent (also available to a child through audio), and both a parent activity and a child activity. Here, the parent serves as a role model, going through a particular activity (shopping at the grocery store, planning a meal, packing a suitcase for a vacation), followed by the child going through an activity. The process allows a parent and child to explore how well the strategies they’re using are working.

“We’re very proud of the adult activity first model, both because it makes it more fun and easier for the child, and the adult gets to talk about their EF too,” says Michael Greschler, EdM, director of the SMARTS program. The program also provides ideas on how to help a child if the child gets stuck completing a lesson. For parents who find themselves struggling to implement a lesson, the program provides ideas for them as well. 🗣️



A clinical and consulting psychologist, **Mark Katz, PhD**, is the director of Learning Development Services, an educational, psychological, and neuropsychological center in San Diego, California. As a contributing editor to *Attention* magazine, he writes the Promising Practices column and serves on the editorial advisory board. He is also a former member of CHADD’s professional advisory board and a recipient of the CHADD Hall of Fame Award.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Watch a short video describing SMARTS@Home: <https://youtu.be/W5YnO6MPJ6U>. The video is narrated by Michael Greschler and Mindy Scirri, PhD, an educational consultant and learning differences specialist, who is part of the development team and a SMARTS consultant.

Download a free lesson and find additional information about the program (including its current cost): <https://smarts-ef.org/smarts-at-home-for-parents/>.

To learn more about the Research Institute for Learning and Development, or any of the programs and training opportunities provided under the ResearchILD umbrella, go to <https://researchchild.org/>.