

Helping Disorganized Children

HOW TO CREATE A PLAN THAT WORKS





Think of a child
who struggles with
planning and
organization



Plans that
work are
built on:

Intentional goal planning to build
independence

Thoughtful, non-judgmental
questions to pinpoint the problem

Well-informed strategies

Accommodations, Modifications, and Interventions

Accommodations change how a person engages with the task but not the content (e.g. extra time on tests, giving child a checklist for cleaning room)

Modifications change expectations for what a person learns (e.g. simplifying or enriching the reading material, child makes bed and puts toys away while parent does the rest)

Interventions change the child's ability to perform (e.g. child works with specialized reading teacher, child works with parent to create a template for cleaning room)

Accommodations and Modifications

Example:

When students
repeatedly get zeros for
late assignments

Why do kids need them?

When do kids need them?

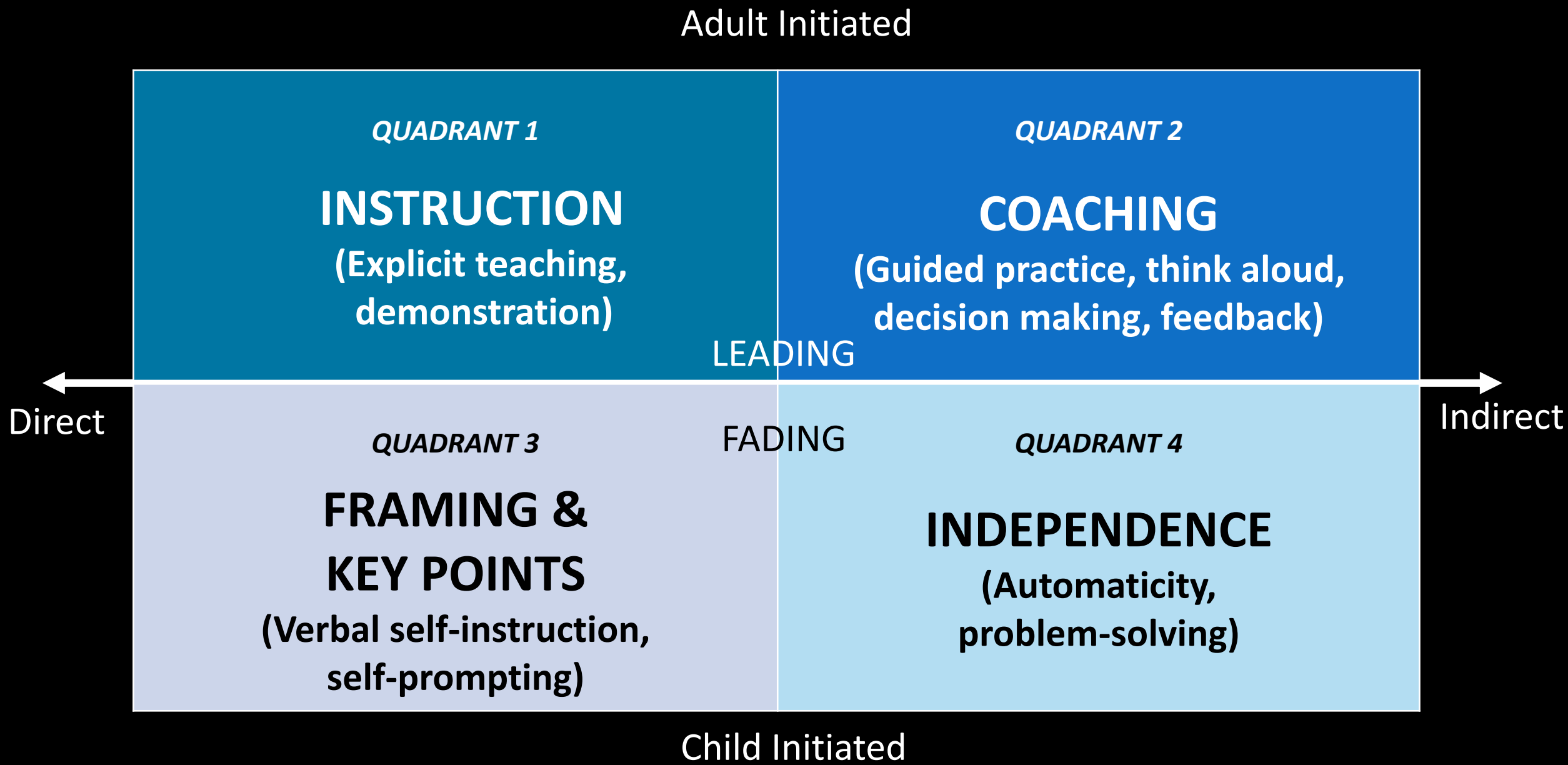
How do we guard against
handicapping kids when we offer
them?

“Success is our first goal, but independent success is our ultimate aim.”

Margaret Foster, MAed

Cooper-Kahn and Foster, Boosting Executive Skills in the Classroom, 2013, p. 131.

Intentional Goal Planning



Cooper-Kahn, J. and Foster, M. Boosting Executive Skills in the Classroom (2013). [Model adapted with permission from Greber, C., Ziviani, and Rogers, S. "The Four-Quadrant Model of Facilitated Learning, Part 2, Strategies and Applications," Australian O.T. Journal, 2007.]

Quadrant 1

Adult-led

Direct

- Instruction
- Demonstration
- Simple guided practice

Once your child is successful at simple guided practice, then it's time to move on to Q2 strategies

Quadrant 2

Adult-led
Indirect

- Engage the child in applying what they've learned
- Use more complex guided practice ("Growth through failure")
- Use coaching to help the child extend what they know to different situations
- Offer prompting
- Use think-alouds
(“Let’s think aloud about how to make a template for packing up what you need for swim team practice.” “Now that you have made a list of all the steps, what do you do next?”)

Quadrant 3

Child-led
Direct

- The child leads and the adult takes a back seat
- We move from prompting to priming, allowing the child to rehearse learned procedures so that they become more fluid.
- We expect to see early forms of self-regulation here, including self-prompting that focuses on the steps and the goal. We may notice that they've made a checklist and posted it.
- We might just check in by asking, "How is it going? Would you like any input?"

If the child repeatedly falters when you move to Q3 strategies, then back up to Q2 again for a while.

Quadrant 4

Child-led
Indirect

- The child uses strategies well and is independent at self-monitoring and problem-solving
- Independence does not mean that the child never needs help, but that they know when they need it and initiate the request on their own.

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Well-informed strategies

Well- Informed Strategies

1. Introduce behavioral routines that create order and efficiency
(Ex: teach children and teens to use a tracking system to plan what and when tasks need to be completed)
2. Focus on executive thinking, not just executive functioning.
3. Build cognitive organization by teaching routines that help kids to organize what they read and hear.

1. Introduce behavioral routines that create order and efficiency

- When a behavioral sequence becomes a habit, it is no longer governed by executive functioning.
- Habits and routines eliminate the need for micro-decisions throughout the day.

Examples: Morning routine, homework routine, chores, previewing text, planning a long-term assignment

Ex: Teach
children
and teens
to use a
tracking
system

- Research indicates that these systems require more adult input and a longer time than most adults expect.
- Support and monitoring helps children to maintain the behaviors until they become automatic.

Tracking systems

There is no “one size fits all” system

- Include “do dates,” not just due dates
- Use the system to teach planning

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Poetry essay- 10 Oct. Saturday/ Sunday
Spanish	_____	Planning for essay	Read 2 poems ✓	Outline for essay	Outline Due	
Math	Page 47, #1-10 ✓	Study page 40-43 ✓	Study page 44-47 ✓	Study 48-50	Test on Pages 40-50	
Science	Bring lab supplies ✓	Worksheet ✓	Read chapter 2; questions 1- 10 ✓			
History	Read chapter 10 ✓	Summary of Ch. 10 ✓	_____			
	Soccer practice	Grandma's birthday	Soccer practice	Thursday note		

“FLIPP the switch:
Strengthen
executive function
skills”

Wilkins, S.A., &
Burmeister, C. (2015)”

Project Name: Research Paper		Date due: May 30
Not Started	In Progress	Completed
Make outline May 20	Research On-line May 15	Write proposal & turn in May 9
Write rough draft May 23	Organize notes May 17	
Have Mom proofread May 26		
Make corrections and print May 29		

Research Paper
Topic: Off-shore Drilling
Due Date: May 30

2. Focus on Executive Thinking, Not Just Executive Skills

Awareness of the need
for a routine or strategy
to meet a demand



Strategies to Boost Executive Thinking

- Make the “how” of success a goal that is as important as the “what.”
- As new demands are introduced, discuss strategies and options for how to complete the task (e.g. book reports, essays, new chores)
- Celebrate successful management of tasks as a separate and explicit accomplishment.

3. Organizing Information

Research indicates that improving cognitive organization leads to better academic achievement.



To model organization of new information



- Introduce topics with a clear statement of the goal of the discussion or lesson
- Prime the pump by bringing previous learning online
- Offer frequent recaps and opportunities for active participation.
- Anchor the discussion with a few key points to cue students about what to listen for.

Teach kids how
to read a
textbook



References and Resources

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References and Resources (continued)

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