

Pills DON'T Teach Skills

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SPEAKERS

Seth Perler

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- S** Seth Perler 00:00
Hey everybody, what's up? Pills don't teach skills. So this is a saying that a lot of professionals in the education world use. Pills don't teach skills. So for you, parents, and for you, teachers, and anybody else who's interested in executive function, that's what I'm going to tell you about in this video and why it's an important term and what the intention really is. I want to give you some background so that you can make useful sense out of this term: pills don't teach skills.
- S** Seth Perler 00:29
So hey, what's up? My name is Seth Perler. I'm an executive function coach, and I help struggling students navigate this thing called education so that they can have a great future. And pills don't teach skills. When professionals say that what does it mean? Well, first of all, if a student, if your child or some of the students that you're working with are using medications of some sort. Hopefully, first of all, the benefits of the medication outweigh the side effects. I have been doing this for a long time. And I've seen a lot of kids where it can be life changing the day that they start medication, I've seen a lot of kids not use medication at all and then be able to really make incredible strides and then I've seen kids on medication where it is not working, the kid doesn't feel like themselves, they don't like it, they're often turned off to any types of medication or it just doesn't, it's not working for them and that the side effects seem to be more than the benefits. And there's something called titration where they should be seen by a doctor to make sure that

everything is on the up and up but I don't think that always happens, unfortunately.

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Seth Perler 01:43

So anyhow, after those things are good and it feels like you know the benefits outweigh the side effects. There's proper titrations, the medication is helping the student. Meanwhile, I'll interrupt myself to say I used to be anti-med. I'm no longer anti-med. I definitely think that there's a lot of overmedication, under medicating, mismedicating and stuff like that. But when the right medication is found, I've just seen it to be so life changing. I'm not anti-med, it just doesn't make sense. So it's all about the students quality of life when it comes down to it. And that's my ultimate question is does this benefit this human beings life? So I put aside the argument of which way you know, am I anti-med or pro-med, like it's not either or. It's if it's right and it's benefiting the human beings life.

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Seth Perler 02:37

Okay. So if the child, and I don't care if it's elementary and middle school, high school, college, if the student is on medication, and the medication is helping, then they are in a good place to build skills. The medication isn't teaching them executive function skills. We have to remember executive function, what takes place in the prefrontal cortex of the brain, the part of the brain that helps us to get things done, to initiate tasks, to stop procrastinating so to speak, to get started, to follow through, to turn things in, to complete work, to organize, to use calendars and planners and agendas, to know how to study. Like these are very, very complex skills. And something that happens that I think a lot of people don't realize is that for kids with strong executive function naturally, so we can look at nature and nurture, and have kids who have naturally strong executive function, kids who execute pretty well. It just seems to come naturally to them. They've been practicing executive function skills intentionally for many years. So that means that let's assume they're in second grade, and the teacher is teaching "Hey, guys, here's how to organize this" and they're in third grade. And "Hey, guys, here's how to deal with this. And here's how to deal with inboxes. And calendars and planning." Well, for kids who struggle with executive function, a lot of that stuff goes in one ear and out the other. It doesn't sink, it doesn't land, it doesn't soak in. But for years, these other kids have been building the skills bit by bit. Imagine an investment. Imagine you're putting in dollar a day, or 100 bucks a month or whatever into an investment. Over many years, you will see massive growth in your investment. But if it's a good investment, but here, these kids haven't been putting any pennies, or nickels or dimes or quarters into the penny bank of building these skill. So now that the pill is there, they're in a good place to start learning them. And the reason this is so important is because it's a big misconception to think that the pill is going to fix

everything. But they are baffled that they see some progress, but it's choppy, and nobody is giving the student direct instruction on how to build these executive function skills.

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Seth Perler 05:00

Your child, whether you're a teacher working with students or your parent, your child needs, this child needs to get direct instruction, compassionate, empathetic, and persistent, supportive help from somebody to teach them how to implement the skills that they are now able to better access. So, what I talked about in my work as a coach is something called 'Frankenstudy.' Unfortunately, we lost the guitarist Eddie Van Halen recently, his strat, his guitar was called Franken-strap because he put it together with a bunch of different pieces and customized it for himself. But in terms of Frankenstudy, the way I think of it for kids is that we need to customize it and personalize it and tailor and help these kids build systems that are customized to who they are. Their preferences, their styles, their strengths, their challenges, we need to help them build these systems. Oftentimes, we don't we just say, "Get a three ring binder, get a calendar, get a blah, blah, blah." And you know, there's not instruction around it, which is insane to me in 2020. It makes no sense whatsoever that we think that people are just going to pick it up through osmosis. I mean, I think people think that the kids pick it up through osmosis because they watch the kids were naturally strong. And it seems like they're just trying harder, like they care more, like they're more motivated, more disciplined, like they just made a choice. But it's not that. These kids who struggle, they haven't been investing over years, there's a big skill deficit that needs to be taught.

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Seth Perler 05:23

So pills don't teach skills. If you're a parent, or a teacher, and you're trying to support a kid who struggles with executive function, and they're recently medicated, and you want to help them, you have to intentionally teach them, directly instruct them, on how to build the skills. And you have to do it patiently, compassionately, empathetically, and persistently over a period of time. It doesn't just happen. It's not just choice. They need to develop the skills and it takes time. And you have to be persistent, it's not overnight. You don't just teach them something one time and then they've got it and you say, "I know you could do what I've seen you do it before." No, they need time to really let it gel.

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Seth Perler 07:28

My name is Seth Perler. I'm an executive function coach. If you like my work, give me a thumbs up here on YouTube. You can leave a comment below. What do you think about pills don't teach skills? What wisdom can you share with people, what questions you have,

ask it in the comments below. Subscribe on YouTube and go to my site, Seth Perler.com. I have a lot of freebies for parents and teachers. My life's work, my heart is all over that site. Go check it out, share it with people. I appreciate if you share my work if you get something out of what I'm doing, please share with other people. Be well, have a great day. We'll see you soon.