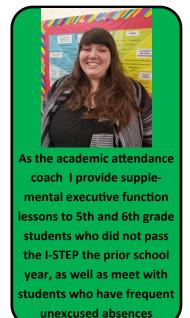# Executive Function Activities for This Holiday Season

This holiday season, spend some quality time working on executive function skills while creating fun memories!

As the academic attendance coach I provide supplemental executive function lessons to 5th and 6th grade students who did not pass the I-STEP the prior school year, as well as meet with students who have frequent unexcused absences

Create stories *(Grades K-3)*

Most stories that children create at this age are a series of events (where each event is related to the one before), and usually lacks any cohesive structure. With practice and guidance, students will learn to create more complex and well organized story plots. This will aide students working memory skills greatly.

Make a book *(great Christmas present for relatives)*

• Have your child tell you a story and write it down together. After you have written down your child's story, have your student create pictures to go along with the plot and then put the book together.

• You can also have students act out their stories after they are finished. This helps provide a structure that student's actions must follow .

Cook Together *(Grades 4-6)*

With the holiday season upon us, cooking/baking becomes a frequent necessity. Cooking/baking together is a great way for your child to learn executive function skills such as planning and time management.

Let's cook *(great family bonding time)*

• First, have your child find a recipe they want to make (or choose the recipe you want to make with your student) and then make a list of ingredients, amount of each ingredient, and kitchen tools they will need to prepare it. (Planning) The preparation of the meal will engage your child in time managements skills, since they will have to properly time the cooking of the meal and properly prioritize the steps in the recipe for the desired outcome.

Family Game Night (all ages)

Board games are a great way to build executive function skills such as planning, working memory, and cognitive flexibility. Some games that promote these skills include card games (Hearts, Spades or Bridge, and matching card games for younger students), Monopoly, Clue, Chess, puzzles, Chinese Checkers, Mind trap, Mastermind, and Rush hour.