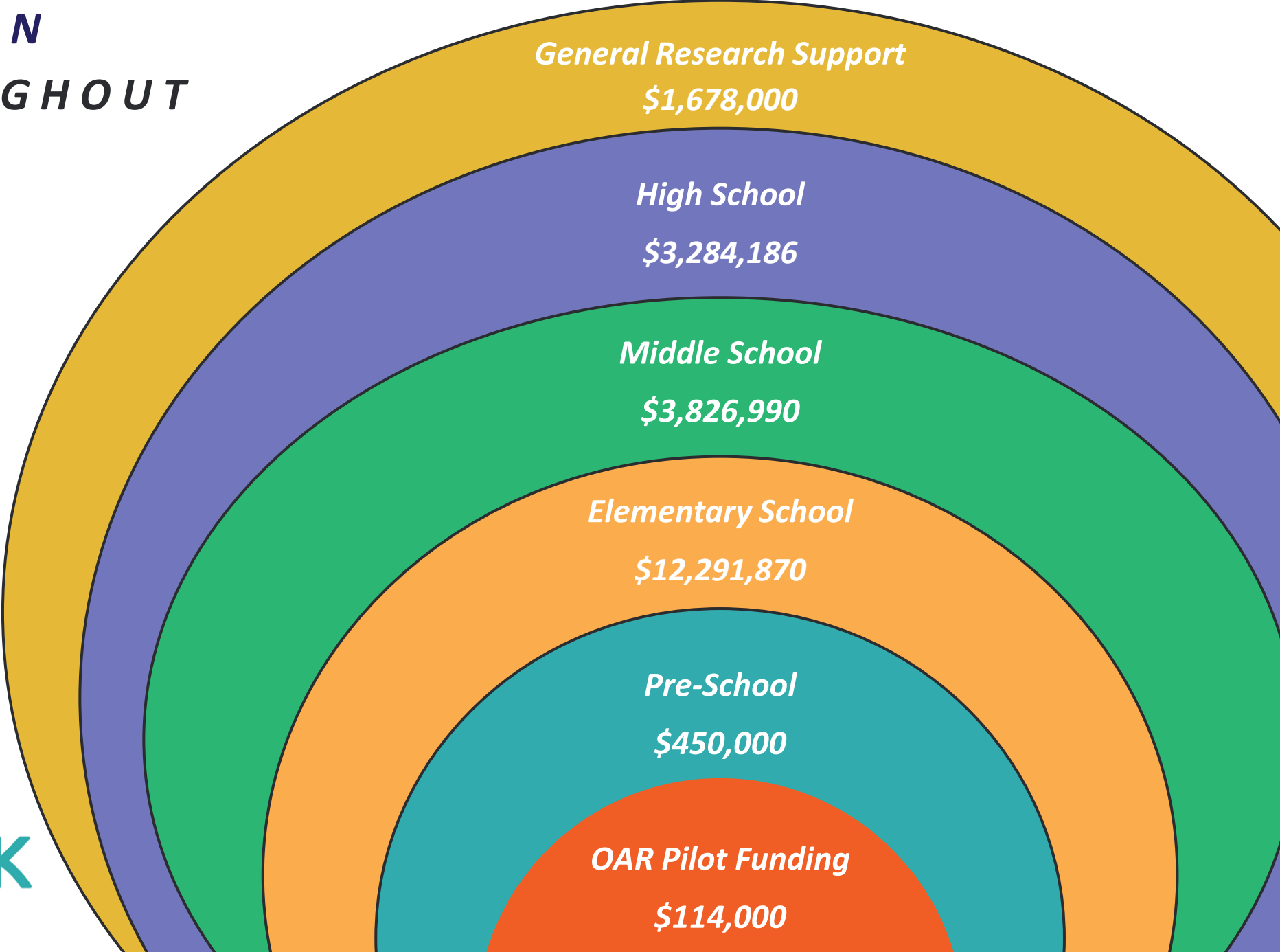


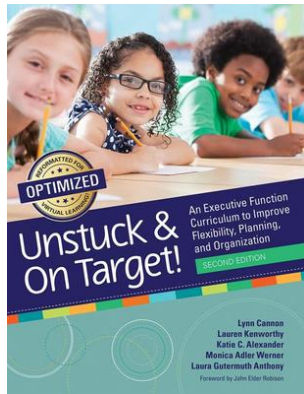
**UNSTUCK AND ON  
TARGET! THROUGHOUT  
THE YEARS**



# Pilot awards from OAR

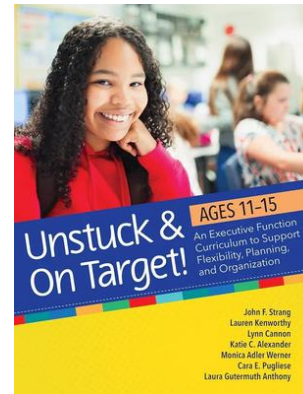


2008-2009



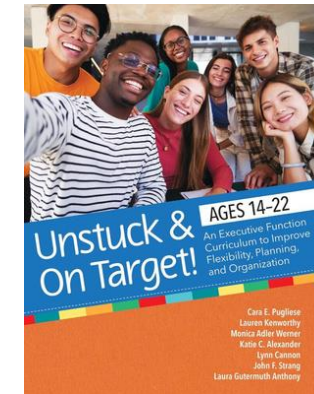
Elementary *Unstuck*  
development  
*pilot: \$60,000*

2014-2016



Middle-school *Unstuck*  
development  
*pilot: \$27,000*

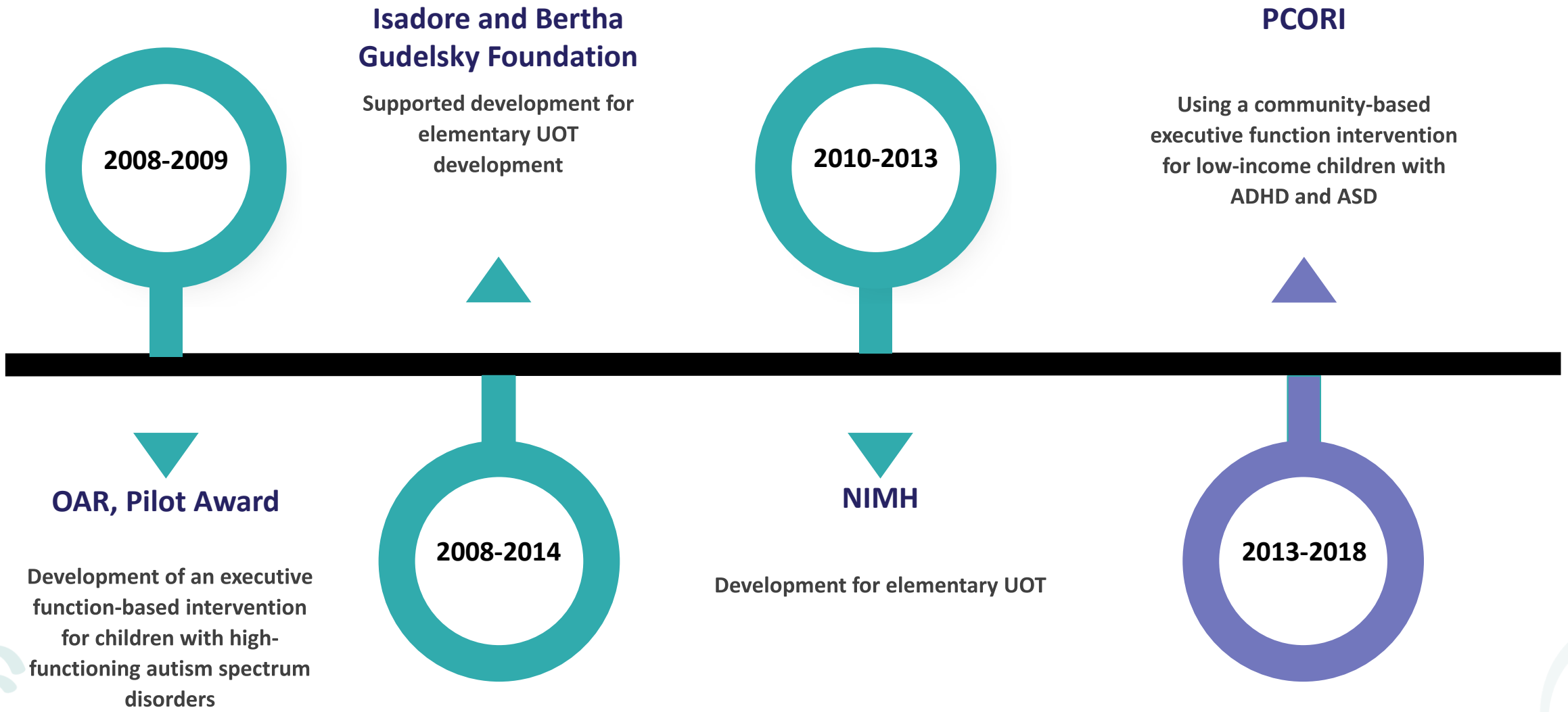
2016-2019



High-school *Unstuck*  
development  
*pilot: \$27,000*

# ELEMENTARY SCHOOL UNSTUCK (AGES 7-11)

Treatment development, treatment adaptations, implementer support, and effectiveness testing



# ELEMENTARY SCHOOL UNSTUCK (AGES 7-11)

Treatment development, treatment adaptations, implementer support, and effectiveness testing

NIMH (K23)

PCORI

2015-2018

Adapting *Unstuck* for use in community mental health services for youth with ASD

2020-2023

COVID-19 enhancements to online *Unstuck* parent supports that were distributed by school staff

NIMH, SBIR Fast Track Grant (R44)

*e-Unstuck* development; evaluated an online, individualized training of *Unstuck* for parents

2018-2022

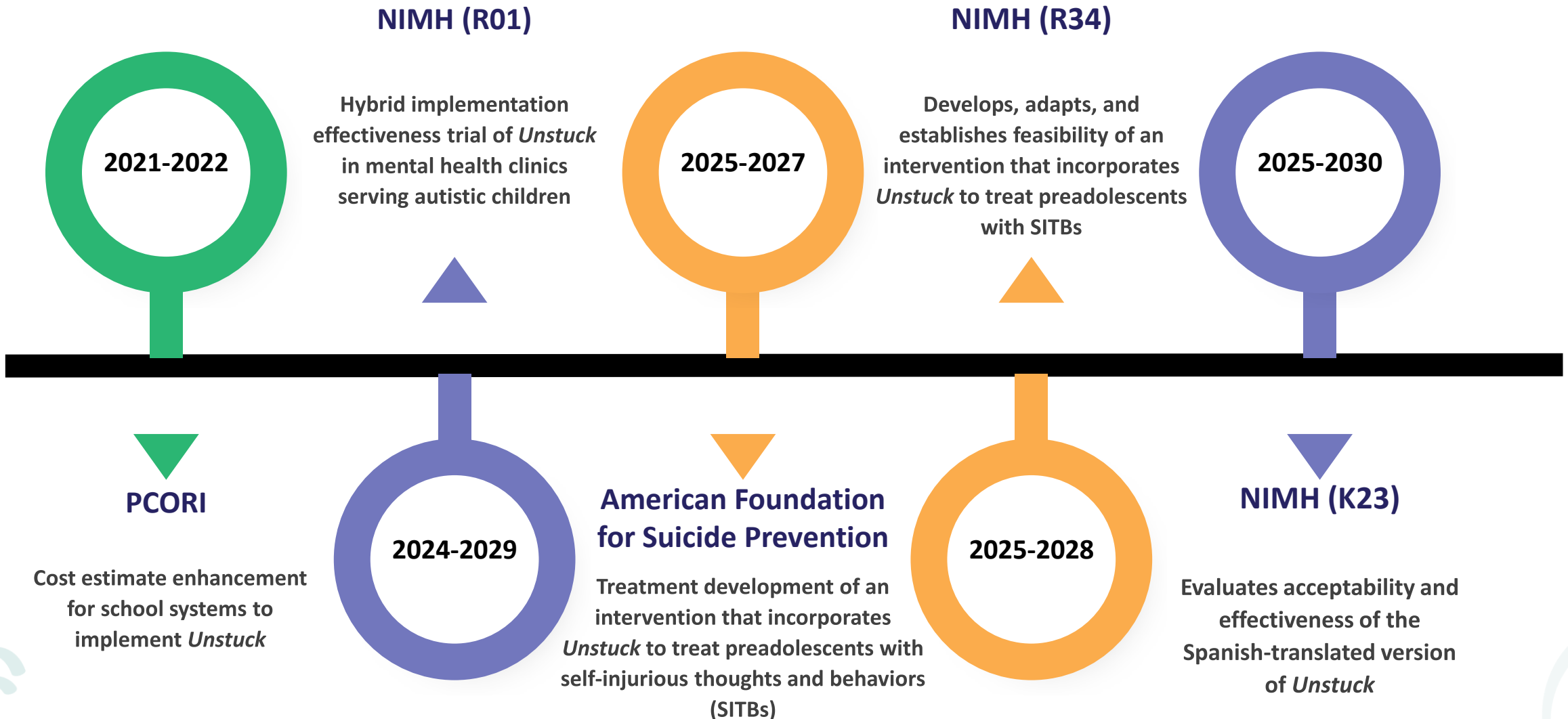
PCORI

Created effective online school staff training to support broad implementation of *Unstuck*

2020-2023

# ELEMENTARY SCHOOL UNSTUCK (AGES 7-11), CONT.

Treatment development, treatment adaptations, implementer support, and effectiveness testing



# MIDDLE SCHOOL UNSTUCK (AGES 11-15)

Treatment development, **treatment adaptations**, **implementer support**, and effectiveness testing

2014-  
2016

**OAR, pilot award**

Pilot development of middle-school  
*Unstuck*

2021-  
2026

**U.S. Department of Education  
Institute of Education Sciences**

Evaluates *Unstuck* in cluster  
randomized control trials to  
evaluate student and educational  
outcomes

# TRANSITION-AGE UNSTUCK (AGES 14-20)

Treatment development, treatment adaptations, implementer support, and effectiveness testing

2016-2019

OAR, Pilot Award

Comparative effectiveness trial of *Unstuck* with high-school and postsecondary prep youth with ASD

2016-2020

NIMH (K23)

Behavioral and neural outcomes of EF treatment to improve students' transition to postsecondary education

2021-2025

NIMH (R01)

Hybrid-effectiveness-implementation trial of *Unstuck* for transition-age youth with autism

2021-2026

NICHD (P50)

Investigates how *Unstuck* changes learning and associated neural activation with learning

# FUNDING TO SUPPORT ALL *UNSTUCK* RESEARCH

**Children's Hospital of  
Colorado Foundation**

*(2022-2027)*

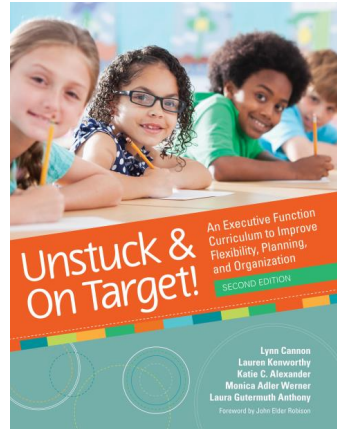
Donation from Page  
Tredennick and Sarah  
Tredennick Blaze to  
support *Unstuck*  
research

**The Robert and Judith  
Atlas Family Foundation**

*(2022-2027)*

Supports *Unstuck*  
research in schools  
worldwide

# Unstuck Curricula: Early learners through young adults



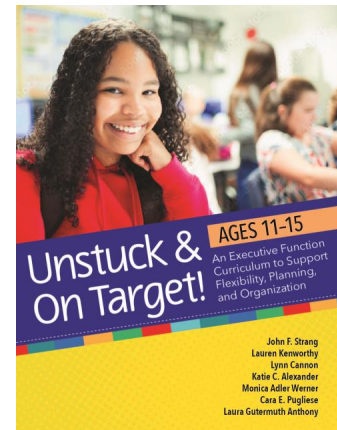
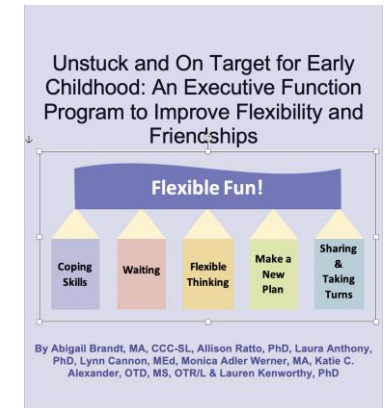
**Age 4-6: Unstuck song, story books, activities**

**Age 7-11: Flexible thinking, coping, GWPDC**

**Age 11-15: Planning activities, building power**

**Age 14-20:**

**Understanding your strengths & challenges self advocacy**



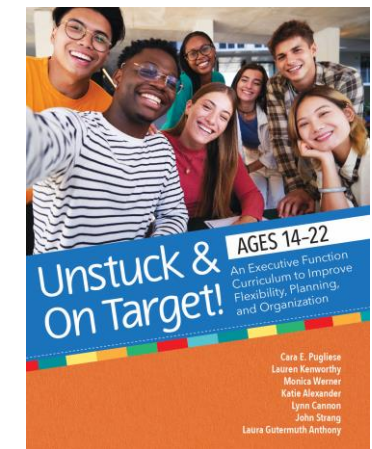
**Tier 2, Small Group, Mainstreamed Students**

**Strengths-Based, Collaborative**

**Emotion recognition and coping**

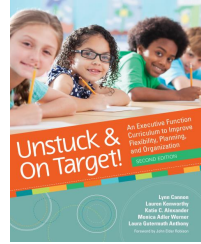
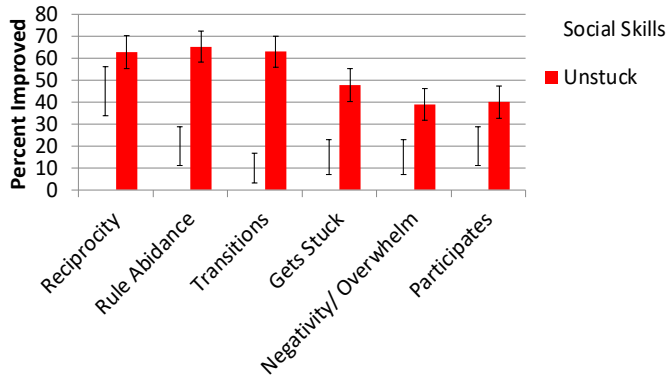
**Common self-regulatory language**

**Make it fun and salient, Praise!**



# Unstuck Curricula: Early learners through young adults

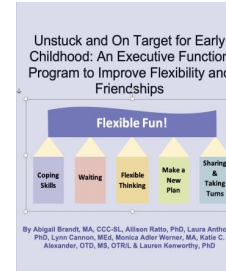
## Classroom Observations (Masked)



Kenworthy et al., 2014

Age 4-6:  
Unstuck song,  
story books,  
activities

Age 7-11:  
Flexible  
thinking,  
coping, GWPDC

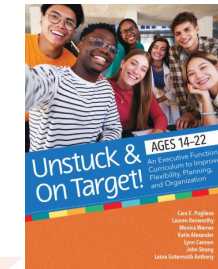


Ratto, et al., 2025

Classroom Observations (Unmasked)  
Total improved Cohen's  $d = .40$

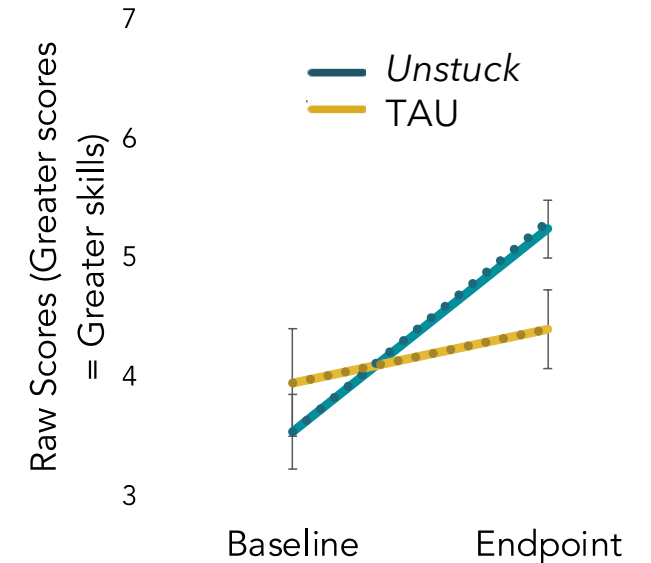
Age 11-15:  
Planning  
activities,  
building power

Age 14-20:  
Understanding  
your strengths &  
challenges, self  
advocacy

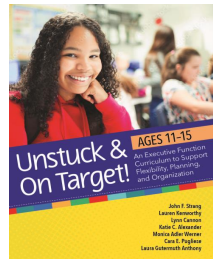
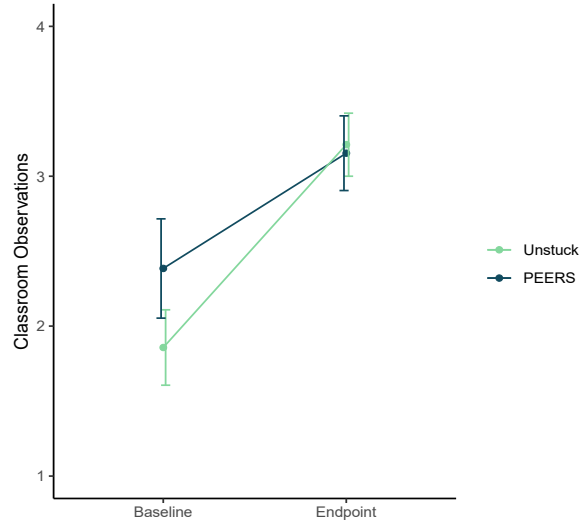


Pugliese et al., In Prep

## Classroom Observations (Masked)



## Classroom Observations (Masked)



Handsman et al., In Prep

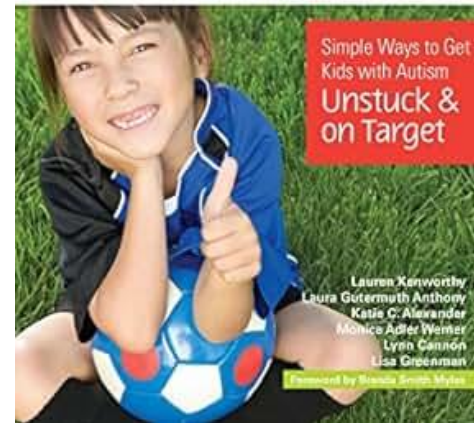
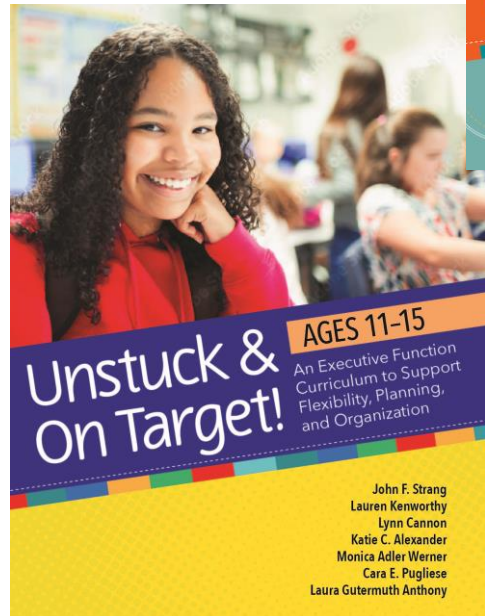
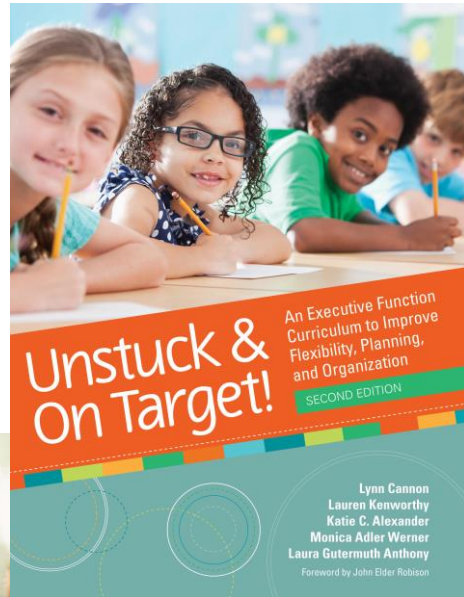
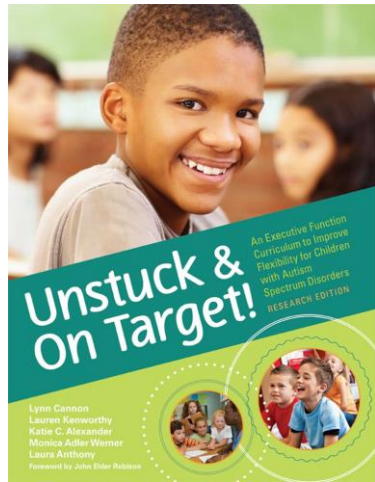
# Evidence Base

Acceptability and impact of executive function videos for Spanish-speaking families	Safer-Lichtenstein et al., (In press, 2025).
Development of Unstuck and On Target for Early Childhood: an executive function intervention targeting flexibility and self-regulation skills.	Ratto et al., 2025
Randomized Feasibility Pilot of An Executive Functioning Intervention Adapted for Children’s Mental Health Settings	Dickson et al., 2025
Development of a high school-based executive function intervention for transition-age autistic youth: Leveraging multi-level community partnerships	Pugliese et al., 2024
“The Videos Made Me Feel Less Alone”: Feasible Executive Function Supports for Families	Smith et al., 2024
Incorporating Community Perspectives to Inform the Scaling-Out of an Evidence-Based Executive Functioning Intervention from Schools to Community Mental Health Settings	Dickson et al., 2023
Leveraging Technology to Make Parent Training More Accessible: Randomized Trial of In-person Versus Online Executive Function Training for Parents of Autistic	Kenworthy et al., 2023

# Evidence Base

Parents Matter: Parent Acceptance of School-based Executive Functions Interventions Relates to Improved Child Outcomes	Rothschild et al., 2022
Mental health therapist perspectives on the role of executive functioning in children's mental health services	Dickson et al., 2022
School-based executive function interventions reduce caregiver strain	Swain et al., 2021
Adaption and pilot implementation of an autism executive functioning intervention in children's mental health services: a mixed-methods study protocol.	Dickson et al., 2020
Feasibility and Preliminary Efficacy of an Adapted Transdiagnostic Treatment for Children With Executive Function Deficits	Elias et al., 2017
Randomized Controlled Effectiveness Trial of Executive Function Intervention for Children on the Autism Spectrum	Kenworthy et al., 2014

# Unstuck and On Target Books: Almost 49,000 sold as of 9/2025 (and in Italian and Mandarin Chinese)



**Parents**

*“Unstuck has changed the way our family interacts. We now all use the scripts and we have a common language that we really try to use in both good and bad times. You know it’s working when your child tells you that you’re stuck and you are!”*

**Teachers**

*“This is exactly the type of intervention needed to support our academically higher but dysregulated kiddos with ASD and ADHD. I appreciate the structure the curriculum provides.”*



Total website visits (as of 2024):  
**122,193**

*“Being able to have multiple plans because if I don’t have multiple plans I get stuck. If I have multiple plans I can get a little of what I want, rather than not at all. In most situations that’s better.”*

**Kids**

*“Unstuck works for clients with all kinds of challenges, including anxiety, ADHD, and autism. More importantly, kids and families have fun and can do it!”*

**Community  
Providers**

[unstuckandontarget.com](https://unstuckandontarget.com)

**GOAL:** Show you Unstuck tools you can use today

**WHY:** Executive Functions (EF) are important and teachable

**PLAN:**

## 1. Unstuck Philosophy

- Understand: Recognize specific EF challenges
- Accommodate: Identify key EF supports
- Teach: Model and practice self-regulation

## 2. Online Resources for learning Unstuck

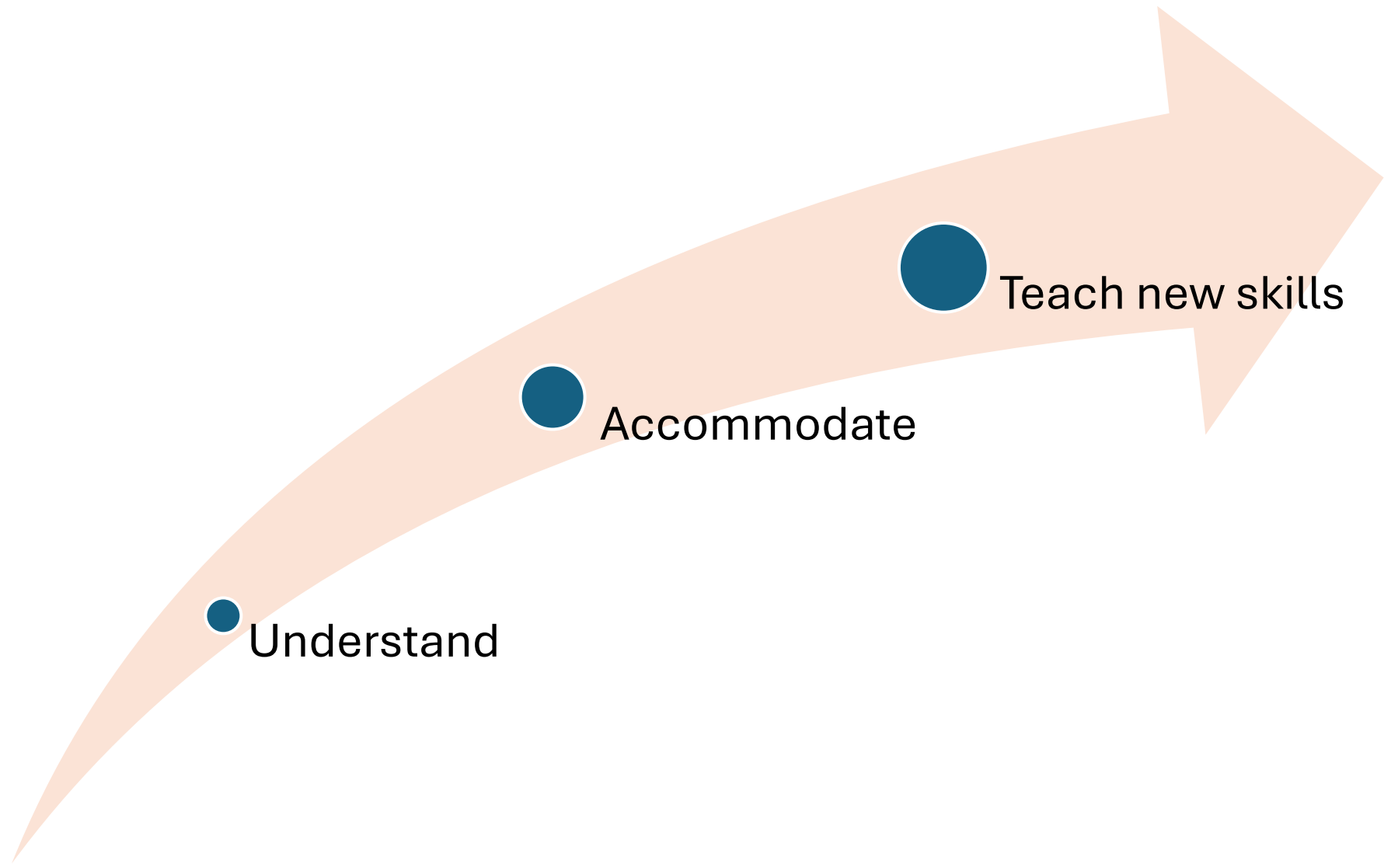
## 3. Examples from Middle and High School Unstuck

# Necessary: Executive Dysfunction = “The curious dissociation between knowing & doing”

EF problems relate to:

- Social skills
- Mental Health
- Family stress
- Adaptive behavior
- School learning & achievement **more strongly than IQ**
- Adult Outcomes

Pellicano, 2017; St. John, Dawson, & Estes, 2018; Lounds, 2007; Moffitt et al 2011; Gilotty et al, 2002; Hume et al, 2009; Blair & Razza, 2007; Zelazo et al, 2013



Understand

Accommodate

Teach new skills

# 1. Understand

Looks Like *Won't...*

Could be *Can't*

Oppositional, Stubborn

Flexibility

Can do it if he wants to

Goal setting/Planning

Procrastinator

Goal setting/Planning

Won't put good ideas on paper

Organization

Sloppy, erratic

Self monitoring

Spacey, doesn't listen

Working Memory

Greene, 1998; Bernstein, 2000

# 2. Support

Access is a legal right



**Overwhelmed people can't learn**

1. Keep it Positive
2. Predictability and structure
3. Break it Down and Make Big Picture Explicit
4. Talk Less, Write More

# 3. Teach: Shared, Self-Regulatory Vocabulary

Flexible

- Great job being flexible

Unstuck

- I'm getting stuck on \_\_\_\_, how can I get unstuck?

Compromise

- Let's compromise so we both get some of what we want

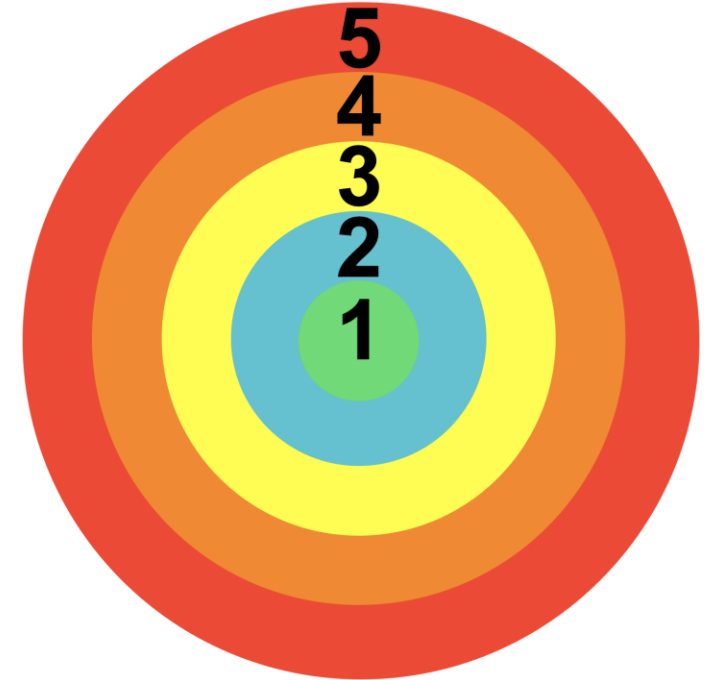
Plan A/Plan B

- What is our plan?
- What is our Plan B?

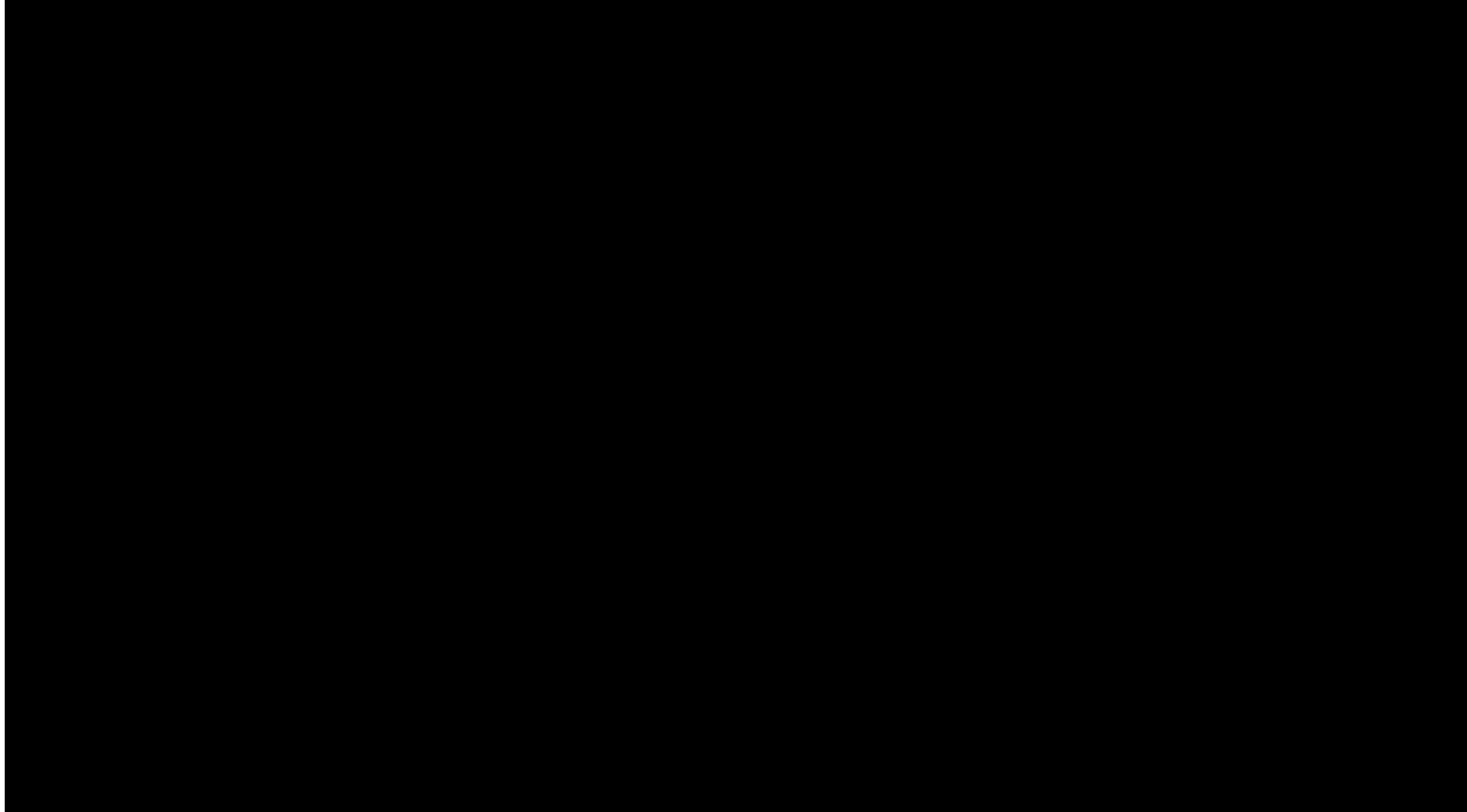
Big Deal/Little Deal

- How can we make this big deal into a little deal?

Goal-Why-Plan-Do-Check



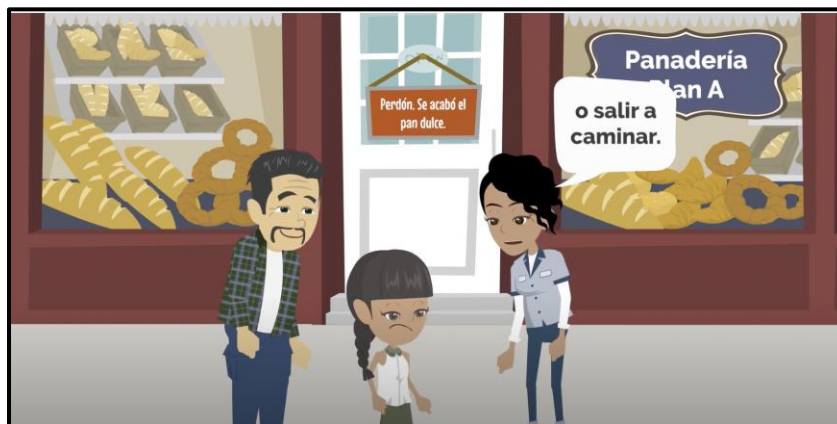
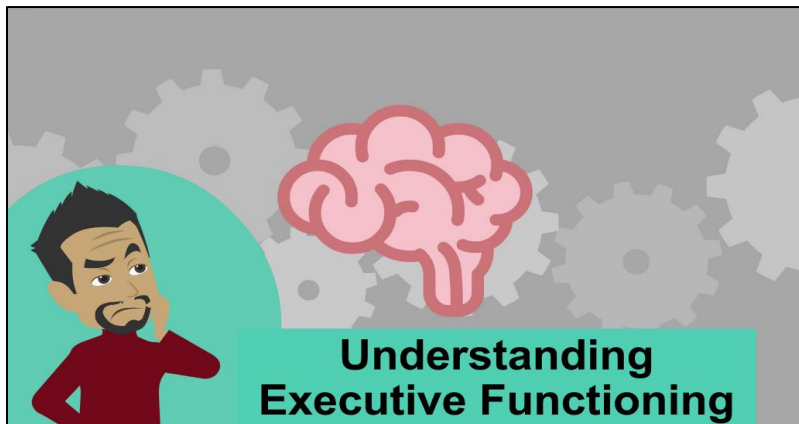
# Family Resources - Compromise



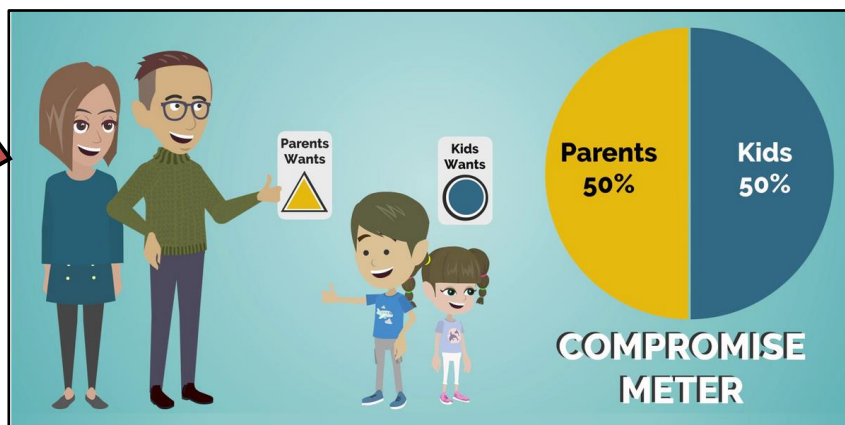
On Youtube with *Unstuck* videos in English and Spanish  
**UnstuckOnTarget.com**

# 15 free videos in English or Spanish

> 34,000 views



*The videos made me feel less alone.... and hopeful.*

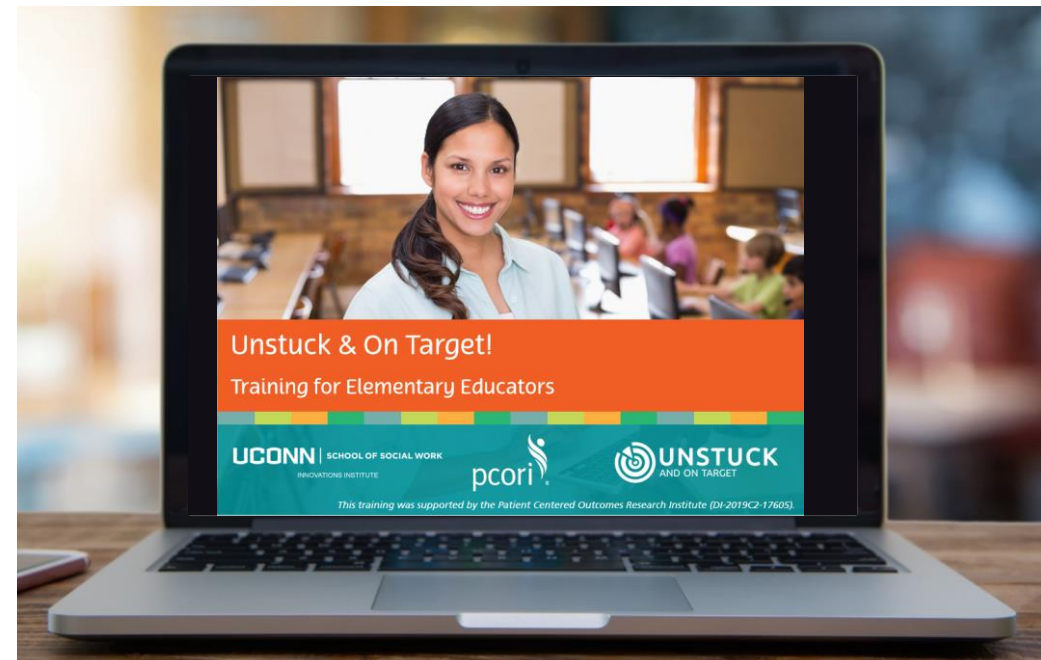
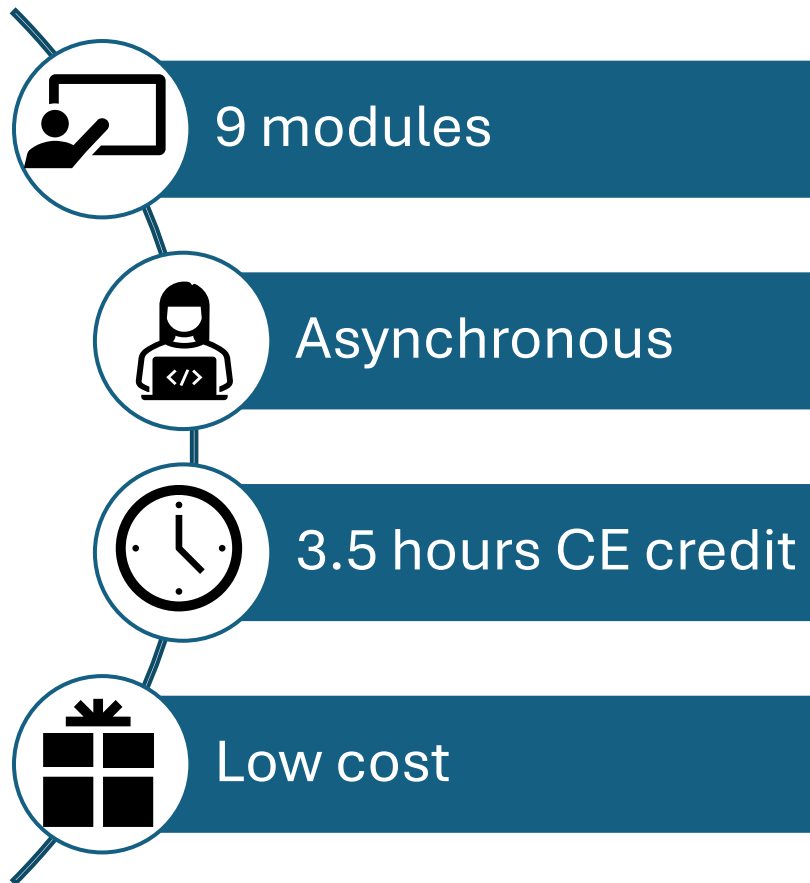


*The duration is perfect. They were great quick hits.*

*[The videos] really helped me understand it's not defiance but more of EF. Taking a different approach instead of arguing makes things so much better.*

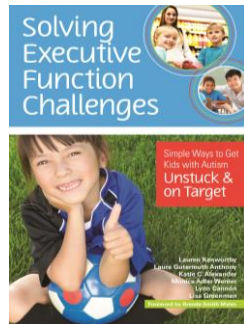
# Online Educator Training

282 Implementers reached >9,000 Students in VA and CO  
>3,000 Implementers have used the training across the country

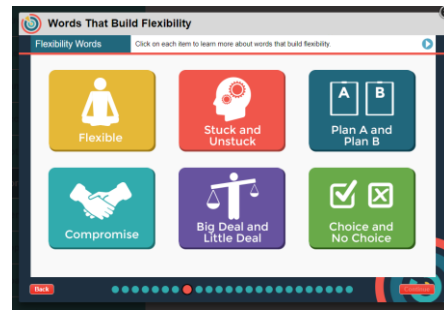


# Online Caregiver and Educator Unstuck Trainings

## Online Parent Training (Kenworthy et al., 2022)

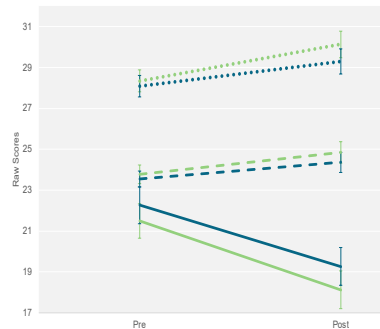


©Brookes Publishing, 2014

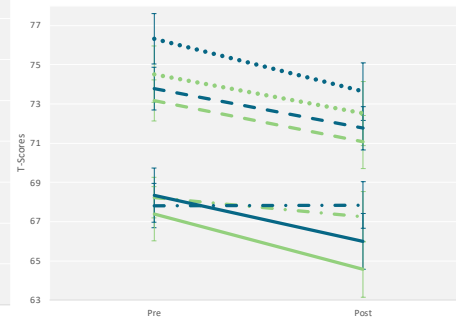


Unstuckontarget.com

## Online Teacher Training



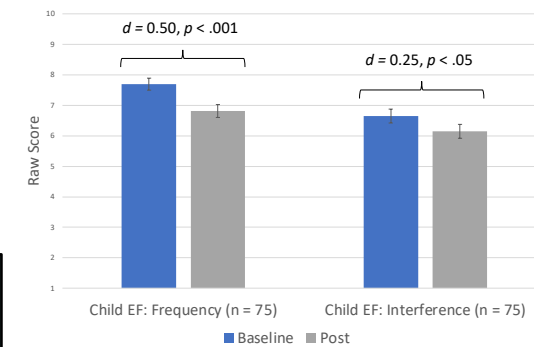
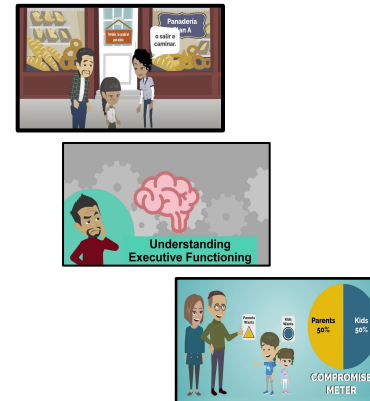
Caregiver outcomes



Child outcomes



## Parent Videos (Smith et al., 2024)



# POWER EQUATION

## Be Flexible

- ✓ Use plan A/B
- ✓ Be polite
- ✓ Compromise
- ✓ Get unstuck



## Think About the Big Picture

- ✓ Am I stuck on a detail?
- ✓ What's the goal?



## Make a Plan for Reaching My Goal

- ✓ Do I have a plan?
- ✓ Am I ready to deal with frustration and disappointment?



**POWER**

The power to make the world better.

The power to get what we need.

# Plan B Party: A Good Party

**POWER**

**GOAL:**

Short term?  
Long term?

**PLAN:**

Think about: who,  
what, where, when,  
how?

**CHECK:**



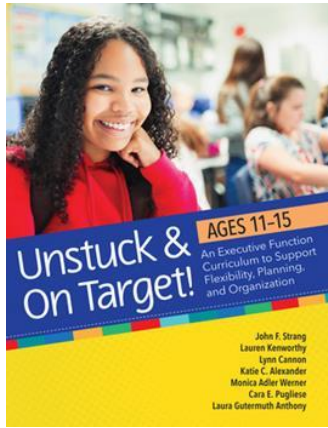
**WHY:**

**Plan B?**

**STUCK?**

Unstuck and On Target! Ages 11-15: An Executive Function Curriculum to Support Flexibility, Planning, and Organization by John F. Strang, Lauren Kenworthy, Lynn Cannon, Katie C. Alexander, Monica Adler Werner, Cara E. Pugliese, and Laura Gutermuth Anthony. Copyright © 2024 by Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc. All rights reserved.

5



How long should we be **STUCK** on that **DETAIL**?

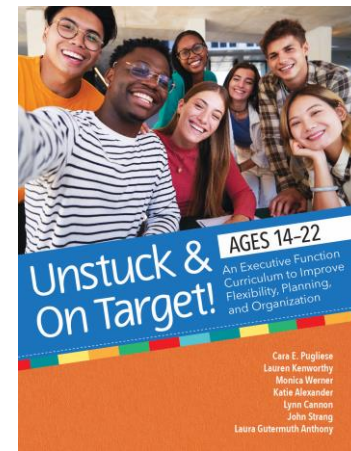
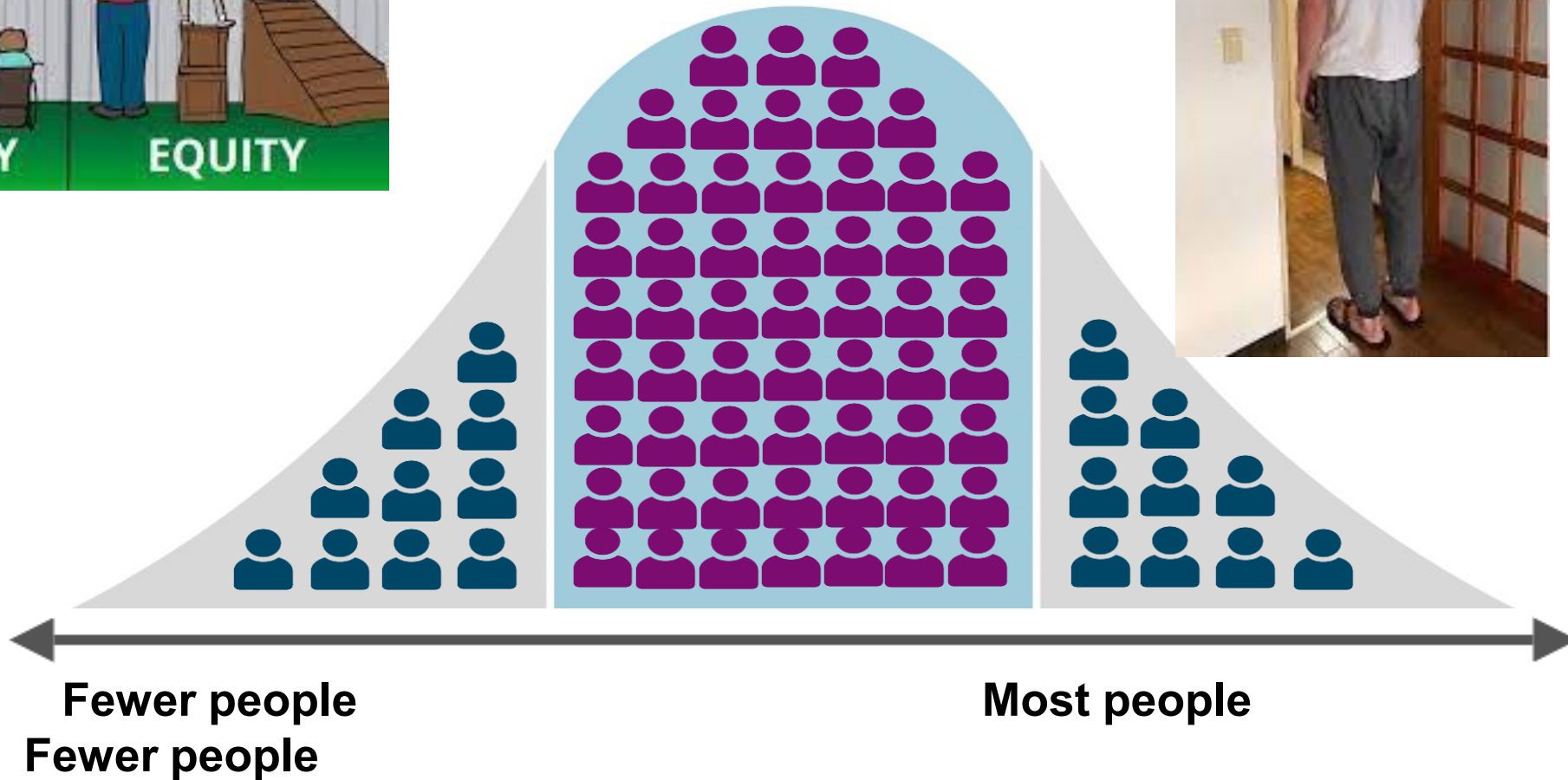
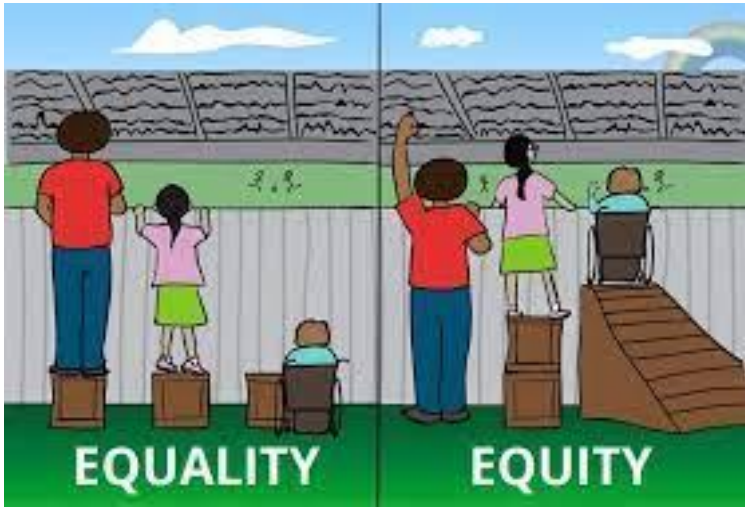


When should we get back to the **BIG PICTURE**?

Unstuck and On Target! Ages 11-15: An Executive Function Curriculum to Support Flexibility, Planning, and Organization by John F. Strang, Lauren Kenworthy, Lynn Cannon, Katie C. Alexander, Monica Adler Werner, Cara E. Pugliese, and Laura Gutermuth Anthony. Copyright © 2024 by Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc. All rights reserved.

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# The World Is Built for the Majority...*but Is That Fair?*



# Resources: UnstuckAndOntarget.com



## Unstuck Research & Development Team

- Katie C. Alexander, Occupational Therapist
- Laura Anthony, Psychologist
- Lynn Cannon, Special Education Teacher
- Monica Werner, School Admin., Parent Coach
- Lauren Kenworthy, Neuropsychologist
- Cara Pugliese, Psychologist
- John Strang, Neuropsychologist



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**UNSTUCK**  
AND ON TARGET

Families Professionals Resources About

Get Unstuck Books

### Unstuck and On Target

Evidence-Based Curricula and Resources for Professionals and Families to Support Executive Functions