Lesson 1 Big Deal/Little Deal

PURPOSE

Students, teachers, and parents learn the Big Deal/Little Deal script and incorporate it into their daily conversation. There are three activities in this lesson.

Materials Required for All Activities

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Whiteboard or chart paper</td>
<td>• Educator Script: Big Deal/Little Deal</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Dry/wet erase markers or markers</td>
<td>• Big Deal/Little Deal Cards (print double-sided on card stock)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Marker</td>
<td>• Visual: Big Deal/Little Deal 1–10 Scale</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Masking tape</td>
<td>• Classroom Extension 5</td>
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<td>• Home Extension 12 and Home Signoff</td>
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Generalization

School Integration

Distribute Classroom Extension 5 and Educator Script: Big Deal/Little Deal to all teaching staff so teachers can implement strategies when working with students.

Home Integration

Upon completion of Lesson 1, send home a copy of Home Extension 12 and Home Signoff. Home Extension 12 includes Big Deal/Little Deal for parents to read and complete with their child. Giving the student the role of teacher is a useful way to reinforce the material.

Modifications

For older students, use activities that are more age appropriate and that cater to their interests. Students may be interested in analyzing Big Deal/Little Deal in terms of their hero’s life, historical events, or scientific discoveries.
LESSON 1

ACTIVITY 1

Big Deal/Little Deal Introduction

Materials

Not Included

• Whiteboard or chart paper
• Dry/wet erase markers or markers

Included

• Educator Script: Big Deal/Little Deal

Instructions

This lesson introduces students to the basic definition of big deal/little deal and a general script to apply the concept when the opportunity presents itself.

1. Review an earlier activity about being flexible. Say, “I am going to make a few statements. After each one, I want you to give me a thumbs-up if you agree, or a thumbs-down if you disagree.”
   a. It is possible to always get everything I want.
   b. It always feels better to be flexible than to be stuck.
   c. Sometimes what I want is not possible.
   d. What I want is not always possible.

2. Ask students if anyone would like to volunteer to talk about how their Mission Possible is going. This would be a helpful place for you to talk about a goal that you are working toward and how your plan is going.

3. Use Educator Script: Big Deal/Little Deal to introduce students to this critical phrase.

4. As you go through the script, record salient points and examples on the whiteboard.
ACTIVITY 2

Big Deal/Little Deal Practice

Materials

Not Included

- Whiteboard or chart paper
- Dry/wet erase markers or markers

Included

- Big Deal/Little Deal Cards (print double-sided on card stock)

Instructions

In this activity, students practice applying their new knowledge.

1. Give each student one Big Deal/Little Card. One side of the card should say “Big Deal,” and the other should say “Little Deal.”
2. Read the following scenarios, and ask students to vote on each one using one of the cards. Is it a big deal or a little deal?
   a. You break your leg.
   b. There is nothing at all to eat in your house for a week.
   c. You are not picked to be first in line for an activity.
   d. You cannot sit where you want during lunch.
   e. The lunch menu changes at the last minute.
   f. Art is canceled because the teacher is sick.
   g. Your pet dies.
   h. Your friend gets ahead of you in line, and you get so upset that you hit him.
   i. Your teacher asks you to revise an essay that you wrote.
   j. You fail a subject because you refuse to revise your work.
   k. Your friend believes in the Loch Ness Monster, but you do not.
   l. Your classmate supported a presidential candidate that you oppose.
3. Keep a tally of votes on the whiteboard, and discuss disagreements.
4. Generate additional examples from your experiences with students, and invite students to offer scenarios. Review at least 10 scenarios.
Converting Big Deals to Little Deals

Materials

Not Included

- Marker
- Masking tape

Included

- Visual: Big Deal/Little Deal 1–10 Scale
- Home Extension 12 and Home Signoff

Instructions

1. Introduce the idea that some things that are a big deal can be changed into a little deal, but some cannot. The death of a student’s pet is a big deal that cannot be turned into a little deal; a student needs time and the support of family and school to get over this type of situation.

2. But some big deals can be turned into little deals. For example, if a student works really hard on an essay and even adds pictures, and then the essay gets stepped on by mistake and torn, that feels like a big deal to the student. But if a teacher can help the student print out a new copy of the essay, the big deal can be turned into a little deal.

3. Place a long piece of masking tape on the floor in an area with plenty of space. Write the numbers 1–10 along the tape.

4. Post Visual Big Deal/Little Deal 1–10 Scale so all students can see it. Read the following scenarios one at a time, and ask students to stand on the number on the masking tape that shows how big a deal each scenario is to them. (Explain ahead of time that these are personal opinions; situations feel different to every person.)
   a. You lose your homework.
   b. You break your pencil.
   c. You cannot go outside for recess because it is raining.
   d. Your pet dies.
   e. You stub your toe.
   f. You have a fight with your friend.
   g. You cannot have dessert.
   h. You lose $20.
   i. You trip and fall down the stairs.
   j. You get a C on your science test.
   k. The computer crashes before you can save your work.

5. After you have read several scenarios, ask students to identify how they would make each big deal into a little deal. Then, have them move to the number that represents this little deal.

**Big Deal/Little Deal**

As you highlight major points, record them on the whiteboard.

### Little Deal

A little deal is something that
- Can be mildly annoying
- You can ignore
- Requires a small change in plans
- Does not really change anything important
- Is a temporary problem
- You can put up with to get something else you really want

Discuss big deal ideas that are important for friends to agree on (e.g., respect for each other) as well as little deal ideas about which friends or classmates can agree to disagree.

Highlight examples, including some involving yourself:
- I wanted to pack a ham sandwich for lunch this morning, but my husband/wife ate all the ham! At first I started to get angry, and then I decided this was really a little deal and that I could make myself a cheese sandwich, which I also like.
- Sam’s friend John believes that T-Rex dinosaurs were the fiercest of all, but Sam disagrees. At first, he gets angry and does not want to play with John, but then he decides that this is a little deal because they can agree to disagree and still have fun together.

### Big Deal

A big deal is something that
- You cannot get over quickly
- You cannot ignore
- You cannot develop an alternative for
- Changes something really important for a long time
- Means you lose something you cannot get back
- Is worth standing up for (you may need to review this phrase with students)

Highlight examples:
- Use heroes that students have selected—Rosa Parks thought that having to always sit at the back of the bus was a big deal. Obi-Wan Kenobi thought that stopping Darth Vader from dominating the universe was a big deal.
- Use concrete examples that are meaningful to students—getting all their points for good behavior is a big deal because it earns them something they want. Keeping a friend is a big deal. Finding a way to have fun with Plan B when Plan A has failed is a big deal.
Summary: Students are learning a self-regulatory script called Big Deal/Little Deal to help them behave flexibly.

What is Big Deal/Little Deal? The Big Deal/Little Deal script helps students distinguish what is important from what is not important so that they can be less anxious about situations of lesser importance and take seriously situations of greater importance. It also provides students with a framework for changing what feels like a big deal into a little deal.

What difference will this make in the classroom? Students who are able to distinguish what is important from what is not important are better able to participate successfully and independently in school activities. Students who have a vocabulary for labeling a big deal can seek help to address the problem, or turn it into a little deal, without resorting to disruptive behaviors.

What should I do to help my student(s)?
1. Use the phrase big deal/little deal to frame students’ viewpoints about events.
2. Initially, use the Big Deal/Little Deal script at times when a student is not upset to avoid creating negative associations with this script from the beginning.
3. When a student encounters a disappointment, an unwanted request for a change in behavior, or an irritating behavior in another student, educational staff can ask the student if it is a big deal or a little deal. This will only be successful if staff respect student responses. The Big Deal/Little Deal script is not meant to allow adults to impose their own viewpoint that specific events or requests are little deals, when students report that they are big deals. Rather, the script is meant to allow teaching staff to help students automatically access the concept that not everything is a big deal and that students can decide how much they care about specific events or requests and respond appropriately.
4. When a student has identified something as a big deal, ask the student whether the big deal can be made into a little deal, and provide suggestions if appropriate.
5. Highlight the Big Deal/Little Deal script in your own actions and reactions to events and demands. Praise students when they do the same.

Key words and phrases
- Ask students to identify/label an issue (e.g., “Is this a big deal or a little deal?”).
- If students are uncertain how to label the issue, scaffold their response (e.g., “This is just a little deal because we can ________.”).
- When something is a big deal to the student, prompt problem solving (e.g., “Can we make this into a little deal? What if we ________?”).
- As staff and students become familiar with this script, it should also be used in an abbreviated version whenever appropriate. Staff or students can simply ask, “Is this a big deal or a little deal? Can we change it to a little deal?”

Summary: Your child is learning to use the words big deal and little deal as a quick reminder that some things are more important than others.

Why is this important? The purpose of this phrase is 1) to help students distinguish what is important from what is not important, so that they can be less anxious about little deals and take big deals seriously; 2) to help them break out of a repetitive, stuck idea; 3) to help them avoid negative behaviors when it is time to move beyond something that really is unimportant; 4) to help them avoid negative interactions with other students over minor provocations; and 5) to get them to engage in something important at a time when they would prefer not to.

We hope that you will use this phrase at home, too. Here are some guidelines:

- Identify or label the issue as being a big deal or a little deal: “This is a big deal…” or “This is not a big deal… This is just a little deal—this is not important.”
- State the reason: “This is just a little deal because we can _____”
- Offer a strategy: “Maybe we can _____”
- Respect your child’s view of what makes a big deal. The Big Deal/Little Deal script does not mean that adults insist that specific events or requests are little deals when children report that they are big deals.

There are several things you can do at home to help your child learn as fully as possible. The more experiences each student has outside the classroom, the better he or she is able to learn and apply that learning.

1. Coach your child as indicated above.
2. As you and your child become familiar with this script, you can simply ask, “Is this a big deal or a little deal?”
3. If something is a big deal to your child, discuss whether or not it can be made into a little deal. Offer suggestions for how this might be done.
4. Complete Big Deal/Little Deal with your child. Your child has been asked to help you complete this to reinforce his or her understanding of big and little deals (the child is teaching you the concept; you, the parent, are the student; the child is the teacher). As you know, your child will learn these concepts best by teaching them to someone else—in this case, you!

During the next lesson, we will talk about choices.


Excerpted from Unstuck and On Target! An Executive Function Curriculum to Improve Flexibility for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders, Research Edition by Lynn Cannon, M.Ed., Lauren Kenworthy, Ph.D., Katie C. Alexander, M.S., OTR, Monica Adler Werner, M.A., & Laura Anthony, Ph.D. Copyright © 2011 Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co. All rights reserved.
HOME EXTENSION 12 (continued)

Home Extension 12

Big Deal/Little Deal

Use red/green to draw lines from the phrase *Big Deal* to all the items that are big deals. Use red/green to draw lines from the phrase *Little Deal* to all the items that are little deals.

**Big Deal**

- You cannot get over quickly
- Is mildly annoying
- Does not really change anything important
- You cannot ignore
- Requires a small change in plans
- You cannot develop an alternative for
- Is worth fighting for
- You can ignore

**Little Deal**

- Changes something really important for a long time
- Means you lose something you cannot get back
- Is a temporary problem
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