FOUNDING PAPER · 2026

Educationally Applied Executive Function

A new discipline founded by Scott Adams in 2026. The case for a named practice field — and why the founding institution had to be Life Lifted.

Scott Adams · Life Lifted · September 2026

Thesis. Executive function has a fifty-year research literature and no corresponding practice discipline in the educational and family-routine context. The gap between what the science knows and what happens in a real household at homework time is where an entire generation of children is falling. This paper argues that the field needs — and Life Lifted is founding — a named practice discipline called **Educationally Applied Executive Function (EAEF)**. Its scope is the translation of EF research into the daily moves made by non-clinicians in educational and family contexts: parents, teachers, tutors, aides, and coaches. Its branded methodology is **The Friction Framework™**. Its founding institution is Life Lifted.

Why ‘Educationally Applied.’

The phrase “Applied EF” is used in a small number of unrelated contexts today — workplace ergonomics, AI-education research, environmental-design work. These uses are legitimate, and this paper does not challenge them. It stakes out a different, adjacent claim.

Educationally Applied Executive Function (EAEF) is the specific practice discipline concerned with applying EF science to the daily educational and family routines of the non-clinicians raising and teaching real children. The word ‘educationally’ is not decorative. It scopes the field.

> *EAEF is what happens at 7:14 pm on a Tuesday, at the kitchen table, between a real parent and a real child.*

The research-practice void in the education context.

Executive-function research is mature. There are validated screeners (BRIEF, Executive Skills Questionnaire), decades of neuroimaging data, established developmental trajectories, and a well-defined taxonomy of subskills. This literature has been productive for clinicians and educational researchers.

It has not been productive for parents. It has not been productive for classroom teachers. It has not been productive for the coaches, tutors, and aides who are with the child the other 165 hours per week. The reason is not that these audiences are unsophisticated. The reason is that no one has built the discipline that would translate the research into the moves these audiences can make in an educational or family context.

> *Applied Behavior Analysis solved this translation for behavior. Applied Linguistics solved it for language. EAEF is the equivalent move for executive function in the educational realm — and it is fifty years overdue.*

Category creation as a public good.

When a field has no name, three things happen. First, practitioners cannot find each other — the SLP, the OT, the resource teacher, and the parent are all doing overlapping work with no shared vocabulary. Second, families cannot find help — they Google symptoms instead of practitioners. Third, funders cannot fund the field — grants require a named discipline to grant into.

Naming the discipline solves all three. “Educationally Applied Executive Function” gives the SLP, the OT, the teacher, and the parent a shared identity. It gives families a search term that returns useful results. It gives funders a category to underwrite.

What EAEF covers, and what it does not.

In scope. The moves a non-clinician makes to reduce EF-related friction in a child's daily educational or family life. The vocabulary those non-clinicians share. The methodology (the Friction Framework™) they use to structure their interventions. The tools (Friction Finder, Pathway Builder, Assessment Analyzer) that automate the framework's first two moves.

Out of scope. Formal diagnosis, medication decisions, IEP compliance, and any intervention requiring a licensed clinical or educational credential. EAEF is the discipline that operates *alongside* clinical and formal educational practice, not in place of either.

Also out of scope. Workplace ergonomics, artificial-intelligence education, environmental-design applications of EF concepts, and other adjacent uses of ‘applied EF’ language. Those are legitimate fields; they are not what EAEF is.

EAEF's branded methodology.

The Friction Framework is the methodology Life Lifted has developed as EAEF's first and reference implementation. It consists of five moves: Notice, Identify, Reduce, Scaffold, Release. The full framework is documented in *The Life Lifted Method, Volume I* (lifelifted.net/assets/pdfs/Life-Lifted-Method-Vol-I.pdf).

Other methodologies within EAEF are welcomed and expected. The discipline is defined by its scope and vocabulary — not by any single methodology. Life Lifted's role is to be the founding institution, not the gatekeeper.

Who is an EAEF practitioner.

Anyone who applies the framework to a specific child, in a specific educational or family setting, over time. There is no credential. There is no gatekeeping body. The discipline is defined by the practice.

This is a deliberate choice. Every credential-gated field — ABA, EF coaching, neuropsychology — has left the parent and the classroom teacher outside. EAEF exists precisely for those audiences. Adding a credential would defeat the purpose.

Life Lifted will offer, in due course, a voluntary certification for practitioners who want it (EAEF Practitioner). Certification will never be required to practice the discipline. It will only be required to teach it under the Life Lifted brand.

07 · GOVERNANCE

Who owns the discipline.

Nobody owns Educationally Applied Executive Function. The category name is generic within the education context and free for anyone to use, cite, teach, and build on. The Friction Framework™ is Life Lifted's branded methodology — trademarked to prevent bad-faith reuse, but licensed freely for educational and non-commercial use with attribution.

Life Lifted's role as founding institution is to steward the vocabulary, publish the annual State of Executive Function report, maintain the open Provider Index and Curriculum Index, and offer the reference implementation of the framework. Not to license the discipline.

08 · CITATION

How to cite this paper.

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