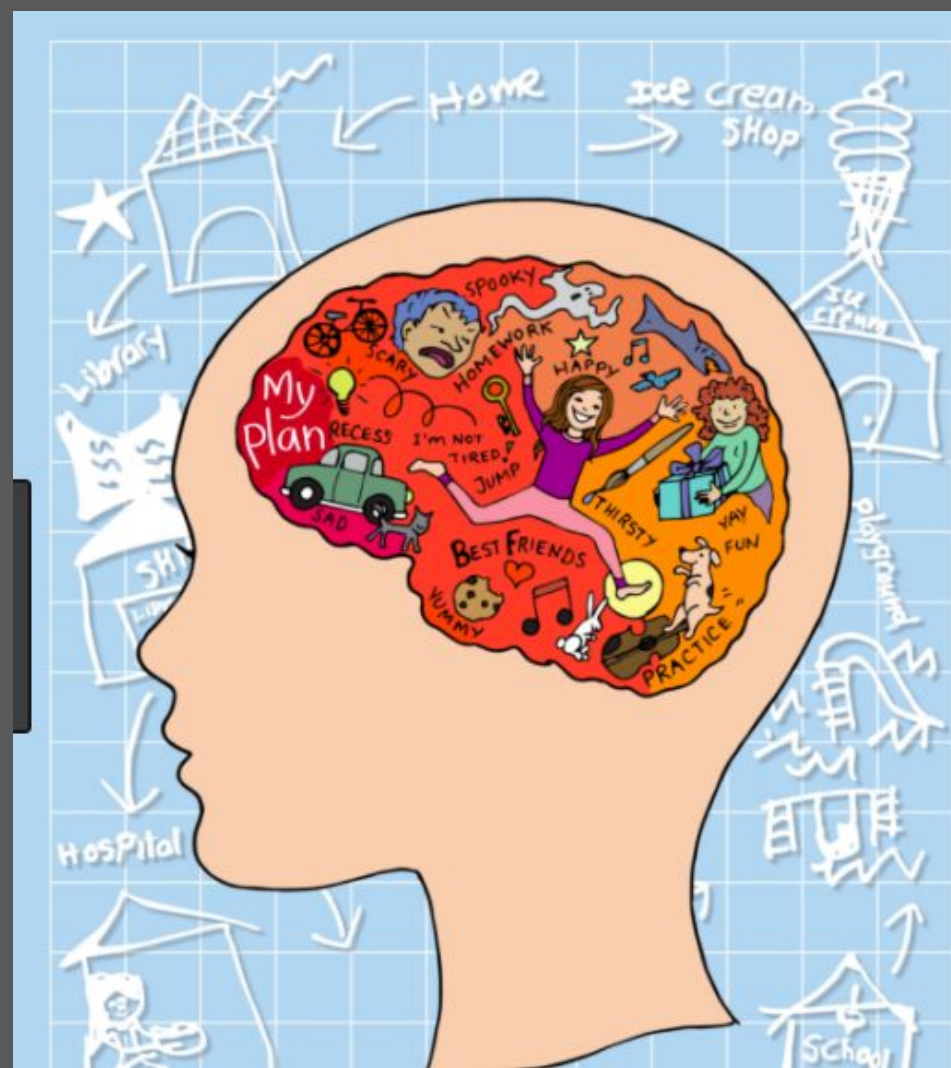


Welcome!

Supporting

Executive Functioning Skills

In Adolescents



MS Counseling Department

Cindy Gilbert - School Psychologist

Christa Haycock - 6th Grade Counselor

Ben Robertaccio - 7th Grade Counselor

Mark Swarstad - 8th Grade Counselor

Getting on the same page



Individually write down what
'executive function skills mean
and then share out with your table.

Executive Function is like the conductor in an orchestra.

- Will you do it?
- How will you do it?
- When will you do it?
- Dr. Thomas Brown

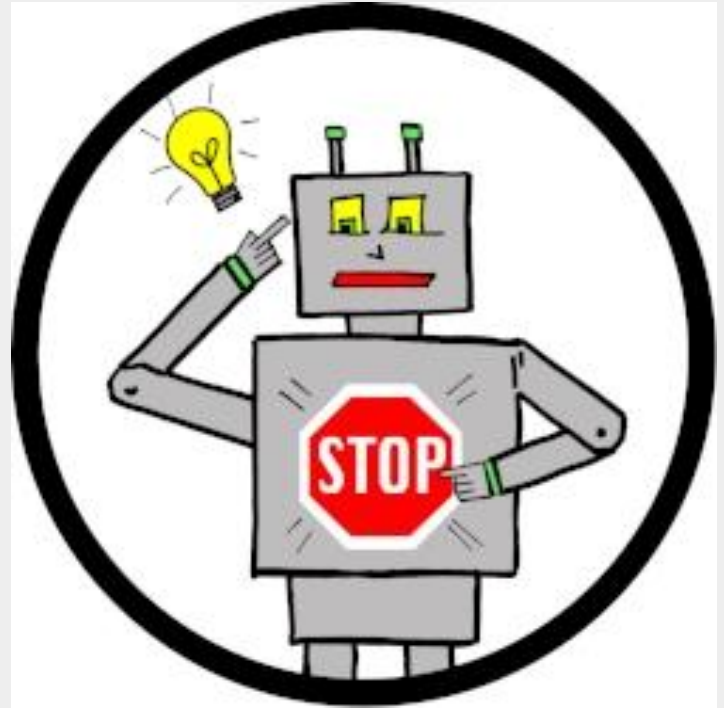


Executive Skills Questionnaire for Parents/Teachers



Response to Inhibition

Capacity to think before you act.

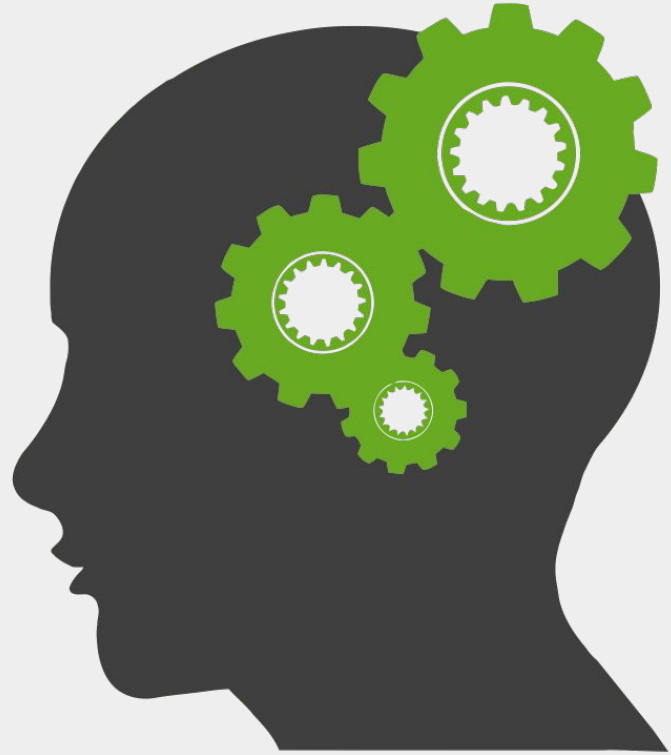


Stroop Test

red violet green black
blue green red purple blue
orange red blue green
orange purple

Working Memory

Ability to hold information in memory while performing complex tasks.



Emotional-Control

- Prepare for events not scheduled by your teen ahead of time.
- Be specific about rules and keep the “have to’s” to a small number.
- Use communication strategies that invite discussion rather than confrontation.

Sustained Attention

Capacity to keep paying attention to a situation or task in spite of distractibility, fatigue, or boredom.



[Sustained Attention](#)

Task Initiation

Ability to begin projects without undue procrastination, in an efficient or timely fashion.



Task Initiation

- Break task into smaller tasks
- Have teen agree to a fixed start and stop time for task
- Have teen set goal prior to task initiation
- Use a timer
- Schedule other desired tasks around the undesired tasks to force start the task

Planning / Prioritization

Ability to create a roadmap to reach a goal or to complete a task. Ability to make decisions about what's important to focus on and what's not important.



Organization

Ability to create and maintain systems to keep track of information or materials.



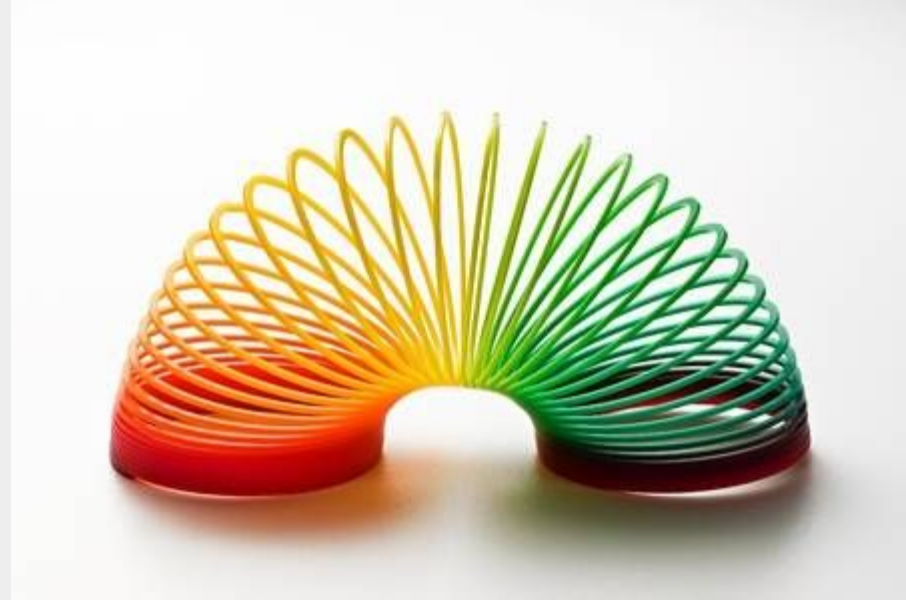
Time Management

Capacity to estimate how much time one has, how to allocate it, and how to stay within time limits.



Flexibility

Ability to revise plans in the face of obstacles, setbacks, new information, or mistakes. Adaptability in changing conditions.



Metacognition

Ability to stand back and take a bird's-eye view of yourself in a situation, to observe how you problem solve. Includes self-monitoring and self-evaluative skills.



Goal Directed Persistence

Capacity to have a goal, follow through to the completion of the goal, and not be put off by or distracted by competing interests.



Student Data



Out of 54 grade 7 and grade 8 students who took the Executive Skills Questionnaire, the top three skills were identified as weaknesses:

- Emotional Control 24%
- Task Initiation
- Goal-Directed Persistence and Time Management (tied)

A Day in the Life of a Child with Executive Functioning Issues

Meet Josh, a sixth grader who has executive functioning issues. Executive functions work together to help the brain organize and act on information. To understand how issues with executive functioning can affect kids in school and outside of it too, take a look at a typical day in Josh's life.



7am

Argh! Josh knows he's forgetting something. Ah, that's it—his cleats for today's game. He runs back inside to get them...but ends up leaving his backpack at home as he races to catch the bus. He sprints past the checklist his mom made to help him remember what he needs for school. But it's too late: the bus is about to pull away! He's going to miss it again...

Executive Functions:

Organizing, using working memory





11am

Josh's teacher asks, "Who has a good answer to the first question I gave you yesterday about last night's reading assignment?" Josh squirms, hoping he won't be called on. He didn't write the questions in his planner and has no idea how to answer them.

Executive Functions:

Organizing, focusing

1pm

It's the best part of the school day: lunch!
But Josh hogs the conversation, talking way too loud and too much about his video games. He doesn't notice how annoyed his friends are getting.

Executive Functions:

Self-monitoring, controlling impulses





3pm

In soccer Josh is so focused on getting the ball that he doesn't keep in mind which direction he's supposed to run once he gets it. He quickly heads for the nearest goal and kicks the ball—right into his own team's net.

Executive Functions:

Shifting focus, thinking flexibly

6pm

Josh isn't happy when his mom tells him to turn off the TV and set the dinner table. When he thinks he's done with this task, his little sister tattles that he's forgotten to give each person a cup. Frustrated with his sister and with missing his TV show, Josh loses his cool and screams at her.

Executive Functions:

Managing frustration,
keeping emotions in check





8pm

After lots of prodding from his mom, Josh sits down to do his homework. But he doesn't know where to start. Instead of doing the book report or the math problems that are due tomorrow, he surfs the web to find a topic for his science report that's due next week. Then he takes a break to play a video game.

Executive Functions:

Setting priorities, starting tasks

10pm

When Josh finally begins the book report, his mind keeps jumping from one thought to another. He can't figure out what to write and only gets one sentence down on paper before he gives up for the night. He thinks he can do more on the way to school tomorrow—even though he's never gotten anything done while riding the bus with his friends.

Executive Functions:

Sustaining attention, staying on task, organizing





12am

It's way past his bedtime. Josh is exhausted. He tries to go to sleep, but he can't shut off his brain. He keeps worrying about disappointing the teacher with his book report and getting teased by his teammates for kicking the ball into the wrong goal.

Executive Functions:

Regulating alertness,
keeping emotions in check

Experience IT!

Through Your Child's Eyes
(Attention Issues)

Through Your Child's Eyes
(Organization Issues)



Simulation Activity

The iPads on each table have browsers saved (on the desktop) with examples of “Through Your Child’s Eyes” for

- Reading issues
- Writing issues
- Math issues

Decide which one may apply to your child and experience it! Each activity is a few minutes. Do one and pass the iPad to another member at your table.

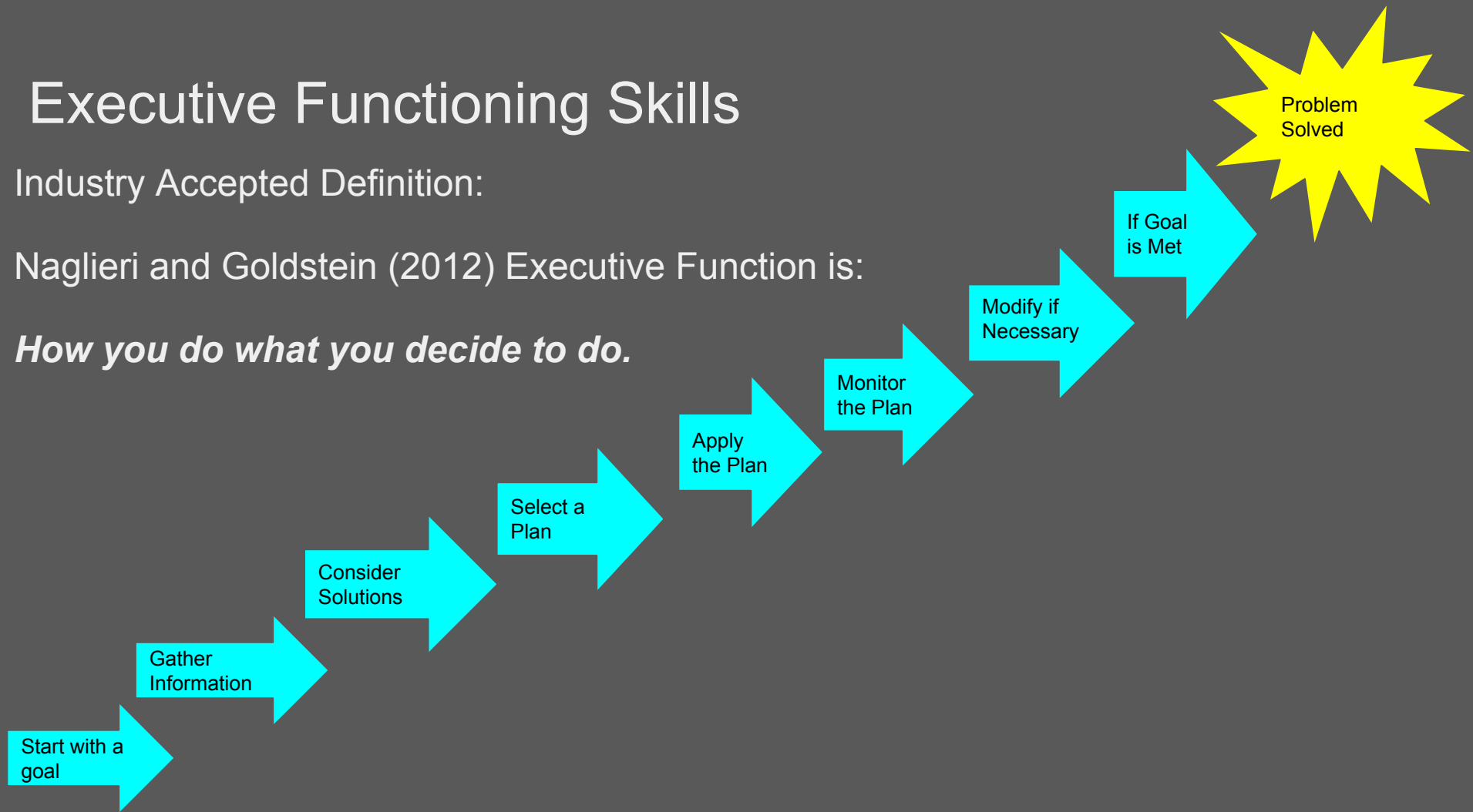
- ❖ Discuss with your table what that experience was like for you.
- ❖ How might that help you understand your child/ren better?

Executive Functioning Skills

Industry Accepted Definition:

Naglieri and Goldstein (2012) Executive Function is:

How you do what you decide to do.



How I am working on a problem often indicates how I am keeping it a problem.

- Hugh Prather

SPECIFIC SKILL GOAL FOR MY CHILD: **TIME MANAGEMENT**

REASON FOR WORKING ON THIS GOAL: **Our son is often late completing HW, getting to bed, and getting up on time**

STEPS TO GOAL: **Get son's thoughts on how big of an issue this is; What needs to change? Get his ideas and add own; Look at current schedule and make changes so he does 'Work before Play'; Discuss bedtime routine and seek changes; Introduce alarm clock idea (Steps to come after discussion)**

WHAT INCENTIVES WILL BE USED TO HELP PRACTICING THE SKILL? **Free time when work done**

ON A SCALE OF 1-10 WITH '1' MEANING BIG PROBLEM AND '10' NO PROBLEM', WHAT DOES MY CHILD THINK THE CHANCE OF SUCCESS IS? WHY? 8, "Because I know I have to change", "I stopped using youtube videos on my own - I can do this."

WHAT PROBLEMS MAY ARISE AND WHAT CAN BE DONE TO TRY AND OVERCOME THEM BEFORE THEY HAPPEN? I make the basketball team and have practice before doing HW. Get started right after dinner and know I may not have 'free' time that evening. I don't get up on time - I have to pay for the taxi or take the public bus.

HOW LONG WILL THE PLAN GO FOR? Review after each week for 6 weeks



*****Look for additional resources on Executive Functioning Skills in the Friday, March 22, eNews.**