

# THROUGH THEIR EYES:

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A CHILD  
WITH ADHD AND EXECUTIVE  
FUNCTIONING STRUGGLES



**OLENTANGY SCHOOLS**<sup>SM</sup>  
*Flourish Here.*



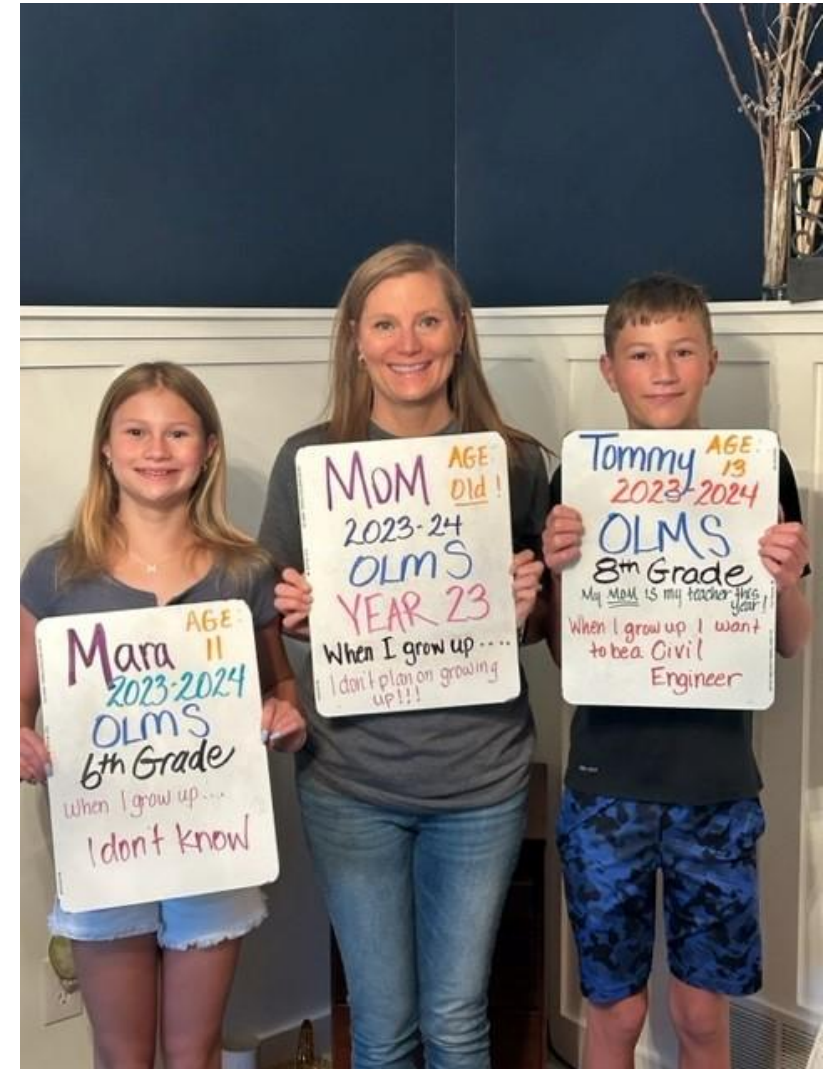
# Your Why?

WITH YOUR NONDOMINANT HAND, WRITE ONE SENTENCE ABOUT WHY YOU ATTENDED THIS PRESENTATION TONIGHT.



# ABOUT ME/MY STORY

- Proud educator for over 23 years
- Currently teaching 8th-grade American History at Olentangy Liberty Middle School
- Executive Function Coach supporting students and families
- Conduct professional development courses on Executive Functioning
- Holds undergraduate and Masters degrees in Education
- Certified in Executive Functioning from Landmark College
- **Personal journey with ADHD and Executive Functioning**
- Committed to creating inclusive learning environments



# WHAT IS ADHD?

- ADHD stands for Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
- Affects concentration and impulse control
- Challenges with executive function skills
- Includes organizing thoughts, managing time, staying focused

**What is the ADHD Iceberg?**

As much as 90% of ADHD symptoms and characteristics lie beneath the surface. The ADHD Iceberg explores both the visible and invisible issues your child may have to navigate. Discover what else ADHD means to adolescents struggling with this condition when you dive a little deeper.

**Visible Symptoms (Above Water):**

- Trouble Focusing**
- Hyperactivity**
- Impulsivity**

**Hidden Challenges (Below Water):**

- Co-Existing Conditions:** Mood disorders, anxiety, or learning disabilities can be present in as many as 50-60% of children with ADHD.
- Emotional Dysregulation:** Children with ADHD can experience intense emotions that are difficult to control.
- Skill Deficits:** Issues with time management, organization, planning, regulating emotions, and problem solving.
- Time Blindness:** Difficulty determining how long a task will take to complete or how long they've already been working on a particular task.
- Developmental Delays:** Children with ADHD can develop 2-3 years slower than their peers.
- Difficulty in School:** Traditional classrooms might not be the best fit for those with ADHD.

**Ascend Healthcare**

If you or your child is struggling with ADHD, we're here to help. Call our team at 310.388.3713 today to learn more.

Source: <https://www.additudemag.com/what-is-adhd-symptoms-hidden-parents-educators/>



# SIMULATION

ARE YOU READY?





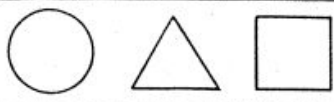
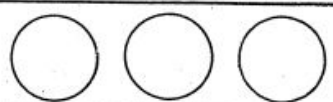
# Language Processing Simulation



Even when individuals "speak the same language" conveying meaning through language can be a tricky business because language has many layers of complexity. These challenges are multiplied for students with difficulties in language processing.


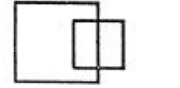
- Linda Hecker, Landmark College

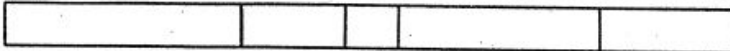
18. Oral Directions  
(See pages 87-91 of Handbook)


Score \_\_\_\_\_

1)  4) 

2)  5) 


3)  6) 


7) 

8) 


9) A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q

10) 82 67 18 27 42 15 72 10 34 36 48 56


11)  MAN BOY HER COMB

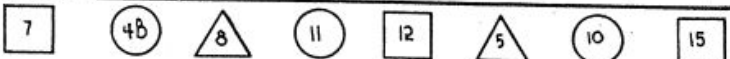
12) 

13) 99 52 41 71 93 64 31 27 47 82 25 68

14)  CAT JUG HORSE FIST

15) H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

16) 

17) 

23

# Check Your Answers





# A DAY IN THE LIFE OF SAM



- Middle school student with ADHD
- Struggles with organization and focus
- Begins the day with challenges getting out of bed
- Often forgets necessary materials for school
- Finds it hard to stay focused in busy environments
- Difficulty maintaining attention during lectures and completing assignments





# EXECUTIVE SKILLS QUESTIONNAIRE

ADULT AND STUDENT VERSION



### Executive Skills Questionnaire—Adult Version

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Read each item below and then rate that item based on the extent to which you agree or disagree with how well it describes you. Use the rating scale below to choose the appropriate score. Then add the three scores in each section. Use the key on the last page to determine your executive skills strengths (2–3 highest scores) and weaknesses (2–3 lowest scores).

Strongly disagree	1	Tend to agree	5
Disagree	2	Agree	6
Tend to disagree	3	Strongly agree	7
Neutral	4		

- Item
- I don't jump to conclusions.
  - I think before I speak.
  - I don't take action without having thought about it.
  - I have a good memory for facts.
  - I am very good at remembering names.
  - I seldom need reminders to do things.
  - My emotions seldom get in the way of my work.
  - Little things do not affect me.
  - I can defer my personal feelings until I have finished my work.
  - No matter what the task, I begin to do it.
  - Procrastination is usually not a problem for me.
  - I seldom leave tasks to the last minute.
  - I find it easy to stay focused on my work.
  - Once I start an assignment, I finish it.
  - Even when interrupted, I find a way to finish my work.
  - When I plan out my day, I identify my priorities.
  - When I have a lot to do, I can get it done.
  - I typically break big tasks down into smaller ones.

### Executive Skills Questionnaire for Students

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Big problem	1
Moderate problem	2
Mild problem	3
Slight problem	4
No problem	5

- | Item  | Score |
|---|-------|
| 1. I act on impulse.  | _____ |
| 2. I get in trouble for talking too much in class.  | _____ |
| 3. I say things without thinking.   | _____ |
| <b>TOTAL SCORE:</b>   | _____ |
| 4. I say, "I'll do it later" and then forget about it.                                    | _____ |
| 5. I forget homework assignments or forget to bring home needed materials.                | _____ |
| 6. I lose or misplace belongings such as coats, notebooks, sports equipment, etc.         | _____ |
| <b>TOTAL SCORE:</b>   | _____ |
| 7. I get annoyed when homework is too hard or confusing or takes too long to finish.      | _____ |
| 8. I have a short fuse; am easily frustrated.   | _____ |
| 9. I get upset easily when things don't go as planned.                                    | _____ |
| <b>TOTAL SCORE:</b>   | _____ |
| 10. I have difficulty paying attention and am easily distracted.                          | _____ |
| 11. I run out of steam before finishing my homework.                                      | _____ |
| 12. I have problems sticking with chores until they are done.                             | _____ |
| <b>TOTAL SCORE:</b>   | _____ |
| 13. I put off homework or chores until the last minute.                                   | _____ |
| 14. It's hard for me to put aside fun activities in order to start homework.              | _____ |
| 15. I need many reminders to start chores.  | _____ |
| <b>TOTAL SCORE:</b>   | _____ |
| 16. I have trouble planning for big assignments (knowing what to do first, second, etc.). | _____ |
| 17. It's hard for me to set priorities when I have a lot of things to do.                 | _____ |
| 18. I become overwhelmed by long-term projects or big assignments.                        | _____ |
| <b>TOTAL SCORE:</b>   | _____ |

(cont.)

By identifying these strengths and weaknesses, you can leverage shared abilities and address common challenges more effectively. It is important to recognize that tension can arise when a strength in one person matches up with a weakness in the other. This awareness can lead to more effective communication and support within your relationship, fostering a better understanding of each other's needs and areas for growth.

# What is executive function?



Executive functions are a set of skills that include organization, attention, and planning. This includes impulse control, emotional control, and working memory. Learn more about executive functioning and how you can help your child improve these skills.

# UNDERSTANDING THE OVERLAP BETWEEN ADHD AND EXECUTIVE FUNCTION SKILLS

THEY GO HAND IN HAND





# THE CONNECTION BETWEEN

## **Attention:**

- Difficulty sustaining attention and staying focused
- Crucial for filtering distractions and maintaining focus

## **Working Memory:**

- Challenges with holding and manipulating information
- Essential for learning, problem-solving, and decision-making

## **Organization and Time Management:**

- Difficulties in planning tasks and maintaining an organized workspace
- Challenges with estimating time and meeting deadlines

## **Task Initiation and Completion:**

- Trouble getting started on tasks and staying on track
- Difficulty completing tasks due to distractions or overwhelm

## **Self-Regulation and Emotional Control:**

- Struggles with managing behavior, emotions, and impulses
- Impact on social interactions and academic performance

## **Cognitive Flexibility:**

- Difficulty adapting to new situations or instructions
- Hinders problem-solving and decision-making



## Source

	ADHD	Executive function challenges
What is it?	A brain-based condition that makes it hard for kids to concentrate, use working memory, organize, and manage themselves. They may also be impulsive or hyperactive. These are all challenges with executive function.	Weaknesses in key mental skills that are responsible for attention, memory, organization and time management, and flexible thinking. Kids with ADHD struggle with these skills. But so do some kids who <i>don't</i> have ADHD.
Signs you may notice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has a hard time paying attention</li> <li>• Has difficulty with self-control</li> <li>• Has trouble managing emotions</li> <li>• Has difficulty holding information in working memory</li> <li>• Has trouble switching easily from one activity to another</li> <li>• Has trouble getting started on tasks</li> <li>• Has problems organizing time or materials</li> <li>• Has difficulty keeping track of what's going on</li> <li>• Has difficulty completing long-term projects</li> <li>• Has trouble with thinking before acting</li> <li>• Is easily distracted and often forgetful</li> <li>• Doesn't seem to listen when spoken to</li> <li>• Has trouble taking turns</li> <li>• Fidgets excessively</li> <li>• Acts as if "driven by a motor"</li> <li>• Interrupts others and talks excessively</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has a hard time paying attention</li> <li>• Has difficulty with self-control</li> <li>• Has trouble managing emotions</li> <li>• Has difficulty holding information in working memory</li> <li>• Has trouble switching easily from one activity to another</li> <li>• Has trouble getting started on tasks</li> <li>• Has problems organizing time and materials</li> <li>• Has difficulty keeping track of what's going on</li> <li>• Has difficulty completing long-term projects</li> <li>• Has trouble with thinking before acting</li> <li>• Is easily distracted and often forgetful</li> <li>• Has trouble taking turns</li> <li>• Has problems remembering assigned tasks</li> </ul>



## Chores for Adults: Maintaining a Clean and Organized Home

Directions: On a scale of 1-10 rank the following chores. Easiest 1- 10 Hardest

### 1. Cleaning the Kitchen

- Washing dishes and utensils
- Wiping down countertops and stove top
- Cleaning the oven and microwave
- Sweeping and mopping the floor
- Emptying and cleaning the refrigerator

### 2. Doing Laundry

- Sorting and washing clothes
- Folding and putting away clean laundry
- Ironing clothes if necessary
- Cleaning and organizing the laundry area

### 3. Vacuuming and Dusting

- Vacuuming carpets and rugs
- Dusting furniture, shelves, and surfaces
- Cleaning curtains and blinds
- Cleaning air vents and fans

### 4. Bathroom Cleaning

- Scrubbing the toilet, bathtub, and shower
- Cleaning the sink and countertop
- Wiping down mirrors and glass surfaces
- Mopping the bathroom floor

### 5. Bedroom Maintenance

- Making the bed
- Changing bed sheets and pillowcases
- Dusting furniture and surfaces
- Organizing closets and drawers

### 6. General Cleaning

- Sweeping and mopping floors in common areas
- Dusting and cleaning furniture
- Cleaning windows and glass surfaces
- Emptying trash bins and recycling

### 7. Outdoor Chores

- Mowing the lawn and trimming hedges
- Raking leaves and removing debris
- Watering plants and maintaining the garden
- Cleaning outdoor furniture and equipment

### 8. Home Maintenance

- Changing air filters
- Checking and replacing light bulbs
- Repairing minor household issues
- Maintaining smoke detectors and fire extinguishers

## Directions:

Turn to Page 12 in your packet.

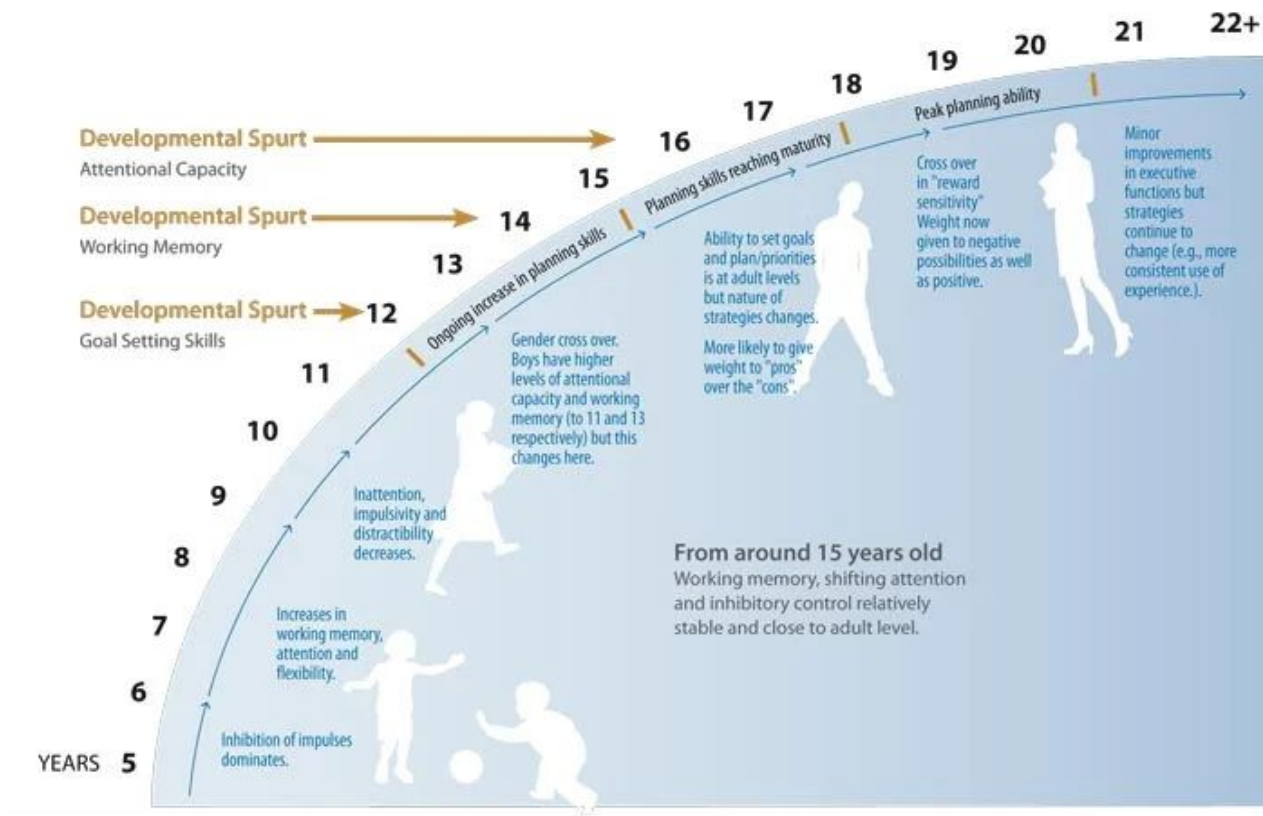
On a scale of 1-10 rank the following chores.  
Easiest 1- 10 Hardest

- A 1-2-3 chore for one person (say, cooking or mowing the lawn) is an 8-9-10 chore for another.
- The chore remains the same: the subjective reaction to that chore varies dramatically from person to person.
- When you ask your teen to use an executive skill that's a weakness for him, you are asking him to do something that falls in the 8-10.
- If the same task happens to draw on one of your executive skills strengths, it may be hard for you to empathize or sympathize with your child.





# The Development of Your Child's Brain: A Fascination Journey














- Your child's brain continues to mature until age 25
- Complex processes including growth of neural connections, formation of pathways, and pruning of unused connections
- Development of cognitive functions like memory, attention, language, and problem-solving
- Improvements in abilities such as regulating emotions, decision-making, and executive function skills





## Executive Functioning Skill Development by Age

	 <b>PLANNING</b>	 <b>TIME MANAGEMENT</b>	 <b>TASK INITIATION</b>	 <b>ORGANIZATION</b>	 <b>PROBLEM SOLVING</b>	 <b>FLEXIBILITY</b>	 <b>WORKING MEMORY</b>	 <b>EMOTIONAL CONTROL</b>	 <b>IMPULSE CONTROL</b>	 <b>ATTENTIONAL CONTROL</b>	 <b>SELF MONITORING</b>
<b>INFANT (0-24 MONTHS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>focusing for objects</li> <li>pointing &amp; grabbing</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>shows interest in color, size, shapes</li> <li>beginning matching skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>engages in cause and effect play</li> <li>figuring out 'how things work' through simple body movements and basic play skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Older children in this age range play simple role play or imaginative play games</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>plays hide-and-seek and simple recall games</li> <li>participates and enjoys familiar rhymes and songs</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>plays simple games like peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake</li> <li>imitation and copying behaviors emerge</li> </ul>	
<b>TODDLER (2-4 YEARS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>understands simple instructions and can run simple errands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>beginning understanding of time concepts including seasons, days, weeks, etc.</li> <li>follows visual picture schedules to order tasks.</li> <li>practices waiting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>able to independently start and complete tasks that take up to 10 minutes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>understands categories and patterns</li> <li>can sort toys and objects by function, form, and class</li> <li>cleans up toys and belongings with adult assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>completes simple puzzles and games that combine language and movement to accomplish a goal.</li> <li>decision making and turn-taking during play promote basic problem solving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beginning skills to shift between activities.</li> <li>Sometimes able to manage transitions and unexpected changes without upset.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>follows along to songs and fingerplays with many steps and movements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>labels own emotions and the emotions of others</li> <li>may often have tantrums or upset when frustrated, tired, or overwhelmed requiring adult comfort to soothe.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>plays active inhibition games like musical chairs, and freeze dance</li> <li>learns to inhibit safety-related behaviors like touching a hot stove and street safety.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>able to direct attention to objects and activities for longer periods of time.</li> <li>Responds to adult cues and redirections back to 'pay attention' when needed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>talks about own feelings and connects simple behaviors with emotions.</li> <li>plays along with other children, directing play and accepting play ideas.</li> </ul>
<b>EARLY LEARNER (5-12 YEARS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>able to follow a planned out set of steps to meet an end goal.</li> <li>plays fast moving games and games requiring strategy and planning ahead.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>developing time estimation and a sense of how long tasks will take.</li> <li>beginning skills to manage leisure time and required tasks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>able to independently start and complete tasks that take up to 30-60 minutes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>organize and sequence stories</li> <li>can follow simple checklists</li> <li>gathers materials for familiar routines, often with adult assistance and reminders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identifies and defines problems to many simple social and academic tasks;</li> <li>emerging skills to brainstorm and break apart problems to identify solutions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participates in organized social activities like sports, clubs, and activities where unpredictable events occur.</li> <li>Often uses adult support to dynamically adjust.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independent with puzzles, logic games, and coordinated group activities.</li> <li>able to collect information and apply it to new settings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>learns to control tantrums and frustrations without adult comfort.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>follows safety rules and most social norms for behavior.</li> <li>behavior maintains when teachers or adults are not around</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>able to save money for desired objects.</li> <li>developing note taking, reminders, and planning tools to help sustain attentional control.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>able to complete activities like journaling to reflect on own behavior.</li> <li>checks own work for simple mistakes.</li> </ul>
<b>TEEN (13-18)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>able to independently plan out the steps of homework or important project to meet an end goal.</li> <li>Works in a group of peers to plan social activities and events.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>estimates how long it takes to complete tasks and adjusts working speed to fit.</li> <li>understands and works to avoid the consequences of ineffective time management.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>able to independently start tasks that take up to 60-90 minutes to complete</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>follows complex school schedules combined with home routines.</li> <li>able to use systems for organizing schoolwork and activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>independently identifies problems at home, work, and with friends.</li> <li>able to sort out many conflicts and make decisions about complex problems independently, make seek adult guidance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Able to manage many unpredictable changes to schedules and routines, but may sometimes need adult support to identify strategies to dynamically adjust.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>able to collect information and apply it to new settings.</li> <li>independent with puzzles, logic games, and coordinated group activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>greater understanding of others emotions, including empathy and a desire for social change.</li> <li>may experience 'adult feelings' but not have experience yet in how to manage them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>greater risk-taking behaviors</li> <li>may begin to test some adult safety behaviors and social norms</li> <li>may engage in self-talk to help manage impulses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>able to save money for desired objects as well as creates and executes plans to earn money for desired items.</li> <li>Beginning mindfulness of distractions, but may need adult support to avoid them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>able to monitor performance and adjust/improve.</li> <li>Uses tools to monitor behavior.</li> <li>May recruit adult feedback or need reminders from coaches, parents, friends, teachers, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>YOUNG ADULT (18+)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>able to develop and maintain multiple different plans at one time to meet many different goals</li> <li>able to establish and meet long-term goals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>seeks out and implements tools and systems to manage time more efficiently</li> <li>uses routines and modifies schedules dynamically to meet changing demands.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>initiates and completes tasks despite adverse conditions and distractions.</li> <li>prioritizing and planning occurs ahead of beginning most activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>maintains neat and orderly systems for daily living tasks.</li> <li>when areas of life like email household chores get out of hand, can re-organize as needed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>generates solutions to complex problems.</li> <li>persists in developing new and creative strategies to ongoing problems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>modifies schedules dynamically to meet changing demands.</li> <li>Unpredictability causes occasional stress, but able to handle most changes easily.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>greatest working memory capacity in early adulthood.</li> <li>able to collect, store, and synthesize information from multiple sources to accomplish tasks and goals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>emotional modulation in most settings including controlling outbursts and managing frustration in healthy ways.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>manages impulsive behaviors across a variety of settings.</li> <li>Withholds rushing through things</li> <li>inhibits reckless and dangerous behaviors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Able to sustain attention in the face of many distractions</li> <li>Eliminate or reduces distractions when needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>checks work for mistakes.</li> <li>monitors and compares own behavior to others performance.</li> </ul>

Executive Functioning Skill Development by Age is on page 18 in your packet.

- Critical role in child's development and academic success
- Includes abilities to plan, organize, prioritize, pay attention, and control impulses
- Development takes time and practice
- Parents can support development through routines, clear expectations, and breaking tasks into smaller steps



# SUPPORTING EXECUTIVE FUNCTION SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- Create conducive environment with routines and clear expectations
- Encourage breaking tasks into smaller steps for better prioritization
- Teach attention control techniques like mindfulness and dedicated study time
- Foster independence and critical thinking by allowing children to make decisions and solve problems





# PRACTICE MAKES PROGRESS



- Executive function skills require constant practice and reinforcement
- Engage children in activities requiring planning and decision-making
- Provide opportunities for children to take ownership of their decisions and actions
- Remember, it's a journey that takes time, patience, and consistent effort

# SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S EXECUTIVE FUNCTION SKILLS

## STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT

- Establish routines and structure
- Break tasks into smaller steps
- Use visual aids and reminders
- Provide clear instructions and expectations
- Encourage self-reflection and self-monitoring
- Foster a supportive and structured learning environment
- Teach problem-solving and decision-making skills

- Promote healthy lifestyle habits
- Collaborate with teachers and professionals

## ACTIVITIES TO PRACTICE EXECUTIVE FUNCTION SKILLS OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

- Board games
- Sports
- Cooking or baking
- Arts and crafts
- Outdoor exploration
- Music lessons
- Household chores
- Journaling







**STRATEGIZING**  
*Solutions*

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THANK YOU