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Through Their Eyes:
A Day in the Life of a Child with ADHD
and Executive Functioning Struggles

Presented by:
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Through Their Eyes:

A Day in the Life of a Child with ADHD and Executive Functioning Struggles

This parent presentation aims to provide an understanding of the challenges faced by children with ADHD in their daily lives, particularly in relation to executive function skills. It explores the overlap between ADHD and executive function skills, highlighting the impact of ADHD on attention, working memory, organization, time management, task initiation and completion, self-regulation, and cognitive flexibility. The presentation offers strategies and activities that parents can implement to support their child's development of executive function skills, both at home and in school. It emphasizes the importance of creating a supportive environment, establishing routines, breaking tasks into smaller steps, using visual aids, providing clear instructions, fostering self-reflection, and collaborating with teachers and professionals. The presentation also includes resources and websites that offer further information and support for parents of children with ADHD.

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Your Why.....



About Me/My Story

I am proud to have served as an enthusiastic and dedicated educator for over 23 years, imparting knowledge and shaping young minds in the fields of High School and Middle School Social Studies. Currently, I am fortunate to be living my dream job as an 8th-grade American History teacher at Olentangy Liberty Middle School, where I thrive in creating an engaging and impactful learning environment.

Beyond the school day, I extend my support to students and their families as an Executive Function Coach. I assist parents in establishing effective routines and strategies to nurture their child's growth and development.

Additionally, I guide college students with weak executive function skills in navigating their academic journey, ensuring they have the tools for success. Through small group executive function sessions, I compassionately educate young minds about the importance of executive functioning.

I have also built and taught a professional development course for Olentangy teachers focused on establishing an Executive Functioning Friendly Classroom. Furthermore, I have presented about Executive Functioning at Olentangy's Think Tank professional development workshop for the past two summers and provided parent workshops for various area groups.

I earned my undergraduate degree in 7-12 Integrated Social Studies from Bowling Green State University. In addition, I pursued further education and obtained my Masters of Education from Ashland University. To enhance my teaching abilities, I also earned a Learning Differences and Neurodiversity Certificate in Executive Functioning from Landmark College.

Outside of my professional life, I am a proud wife and mother to two amazing kids. My personal journey with ADHD and Executive Functioning began when my oldest child started experiencing difficulties in first grade. During a parent-teacher conference, my husband and I learned about our son's struggles with staying focused, sitting still, and managing his behavior, which are all classic signs of ADHD. Despite our concerns, it took the gentle persistence of his supportive first-grade teacher, Mrs. Shaw, to help my husband recognize and accept our son's ADHD diagnosis.



As our son progressed to second grade, we embarked on a journey of assessments and interventions to address his learning difficulties. Despite being below grade level in reading and lacking crucial skills, we remained determined to help him succeed. In December of that year, we placed him on an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and implemented the Orton-Gillingham approach. Witnessing the tremendous improvement in his reading skills, he successfully passed Ohio's 3rd-grade reading test in the fall of his 3rd-grade year. Receiving that letter indicating his success filled me with immense relief and pride.


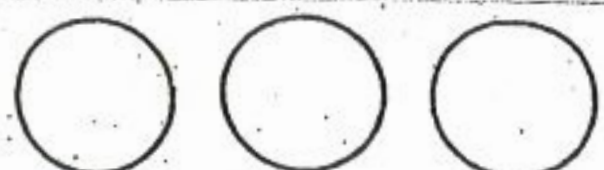

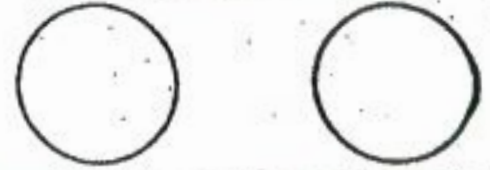

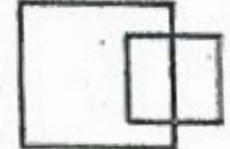
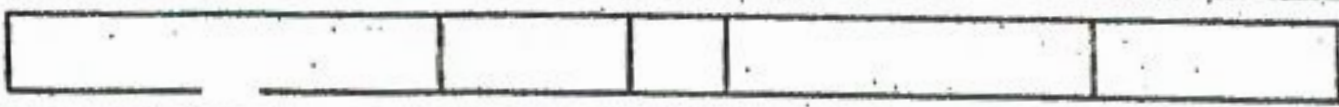


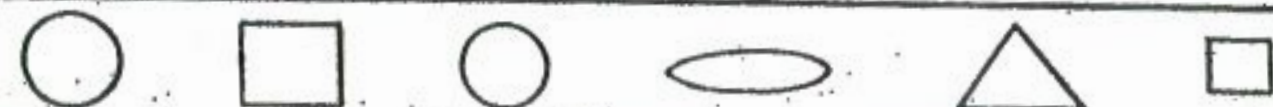
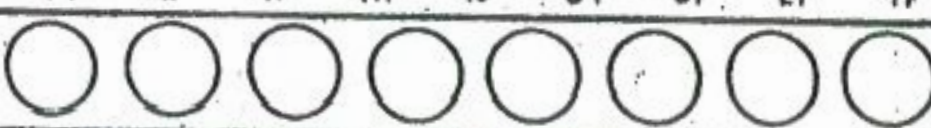

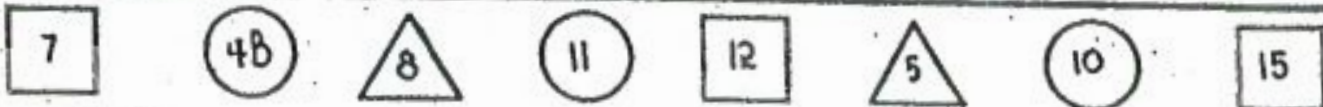
While our son made academic progress, he continued to struggle with basic tasks that seemed effortless for others. Why was it a challenge for him to clean his room or complete assignments, yet he could effortlessly focus on building intricate block structures for hours? Why was I concerned about the condition of his desk at school because of its messiness? These questions weighed heavily on my mind.

One particular incident served as a turning point in my understanding. One day, after repeatedly instructing my son to make his bed, brush his teeth, and complete other chores, I found him engrossed in playing with Legos on his bedroom floor. Overwhelmed by frustration, I lost my temper and raised my voice. In response, my son uttered words that struck a chord deep within me: "Mom, you always yell at me for not doing what you say. I want to do what you want, I just don't know how." Those words stopped me in my tracks. I realized that my son was not intentionally defying me; he simply struggled to remember and execute instructions. If I was making him feel this way, how were my students feeling when I grew frustrated with them for similar challenges? I realized that I had been expecting my child and my students to possess skills that had never been explicitly taught. Motivated to do better, I made a commitment to further educate myself about ADHD and Executive Functioning Skills. I immersed myself in reading, attended professional development opportunities, listened to podcasts, and even returned to college to obtain a Learning Differences and Neurodiversity Certificate in executive functioning. As a result, I gained valuable knowledge and insights, and I now consider myself well-informed and passionate about helping others facing similar challenges. I have become a better mother and teacher, dedicated to supporting individuals who have walked in my shoes.

My personal journey with my son's ADHD and Executive Functioning challenges has not only transformed my perspectives as a parent but has also shaped me into a more compassionate and effective educator. I am committed to creating inclusive learning environments and assisting students who may struggle with ADHD and Executive Functioning challenges.



Simulation

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													

A Day in the Life

Sam, a middle school student, faces numerous challenges every day as they navigate school with ADHD. ADHD stands for Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, a condition that affects their ability to concentrate and control their impulses. One of the areas where Sam struggles the most is with executive function skills, which includes things like organizing thoughts, managing time, and staying focused.

Sam's day usually begins with the sound of their alarm clock blaring. Getting out of bed can be a challenge, as their mind is often racing with thoughts from the previous day. They easily get distracted by the comforting warmth of their blankets or the fascinating world of social media. It takes Sam a little extra time and effort to get up and start their day.

Once Sam is finally ready for school, they quickly grab their backpack and head towards the bus stop. However, staying organized can be an ongoing battle. They often forget to pack necessary materials like textbooks, notebooks, or even lunch. This leads to frequent trips to the school office or relying on classmates' generosity for notes and assignments.

As the bus arrives at school, Sam enters a bustling hallway filled with students rushing to their classrooms. This overwhelming environment makes it harder for Sam to stay focused. The noisy chatter, colorful posters, and constant movement can be highly distracting. Sam finds it useful to wear noise-canceling headphones during these moments to minimize distractions and create a more peaceful learning environment.

Once Sam settles into their first class, they face another obstacle—maintaining attention during lectures and completing assignments. Their mind frequently wanders, making it difficult to absorb information. Sam struggles to stay engaged and often misses important details or instructions from the teacher.

One of the significant hurdles for Sam is managing their time effectively throughout the school day. They often struggle to estimate how long tasks will take, leading to incomplete assignments or rushing through tasks at the last minute. This lack of time management skills can cause additional stress and anxiety for Sam.

During lunch break, Sam faces a different set of challenges. The cafeteria is typically busy and noisy, which can be overwhelming. They find it difficult to concentrate on eating in such an environment. Additionally, maintaining social connections with peers can be demanding. Sam sometimes misinterprets social cues due to impulsivity and struggles with making and keeping friends.

As the school day comes to an end, Sam often feels mentally drained. The constant effort to focus and stay organized can be exhausting. They may feel frustrated and discouraged by their struggles, wondering why they can't perform tasks as easily as their peers.

Remember, ADHD is a unique characteristic that presents its own set of challenges, but it does not define who a person is. With understanding, support, and effective strategies, individuals like Sam can flourish academically and in all aspects of life.



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	Score
1. I don't jump to conclusions.	_____
2. I think before I speak.	_____
3. I don't take action without having all the facts.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	_____
4. I have a good memory for facts, dates, and details.	_____
5. I am very good at remembering the things I have committed to do.	_____
6. I seldom need reminders to complete tasks.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	_____
7. My emotions seldom get in the way when performing on the job.	_____
8. Little things do not affect me emotionally or distract me from the task at hand.	_____
9. I can defer my personal feelings until after a task has been completed.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	_____
10. No matter what the task, I believe in getting started as soon as possible.	_____
11. Procrastination is usually not a problem for me.	_____
12. I seldom leave tasks to the last minute.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	_____
13. I find it easy to stay focused on my work.	_____
14. Once I start an assignment, I work diligently until it's completed.	_____
15. Even when interrupted, I find it easy to get back and complete the job at hand.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	_____
16. When I plan out my day, I identify priorities and stick to them.	_____
17. When I have a lot to do, I can easily focus on the most important things.	_____
18. I typically break big tasks down into subtasks and timelines.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	_____

19. I am an organized person. _____
20. It is natural for me to keep my work area neat and organized. _____
21. I am good at maintaining systems for organizing my work. _____
- TOTAL SCORE:** _____
22. At the end of the day, I've usually finished what I set out to do. _____
23. I am good at estimating how long it takes to do something. _____
24. I am usually on time for appointments and activities. _____
- TOTAL SCORE:** _____
25. I take unexpected events in stride. _____
26. I easily adjust to changes in plans and priorities. _____
27. I consider myself to be flexible and adaptive to change. _____
- TOTAL SCORE:** _____
28. I routinely evaluate my performance and devise methods for personal improvement. _____
29. I am able to step back from a situation in order to make objective decisions. _____
30. I "read" situations well and can adjust my behavior based on the reactions of others. _____
- TOTAL SCORE:** _____
31. I think of myself as being driven to meet my goals. _____
32. I easily give up immediate pleasures to work on long-term goals. _____
33. I believe in setting and achieving high levels of performance. _____
- TOTAL SCORE:** _____
34. I enjoy working in a highly demanding, fast-paced environment. _____
35. A certain amount of pressure helps me to perform at my best. _____
36. Jobs that include a fair degree of unpredictability appeal to me. _____
- TOTAL SCORE:** _____

KEY			
Items	Executive Skill	Items	Executive Skill
1-3	Response inhibition	4-6	Working memory
7-9	Emotional control	10-12	Task initiation
13-15	Sustained attention	16-18	Planning/prioritization
19-21	Organization	22-24	Time management
25-27	Flexibility	28-30	Metacognition
31-33	Goal-directed persistence	34-36	Stress tolerance

Strongest Skills

Weakest Skills



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.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	_____
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.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	_____
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.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	_____
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.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	_____
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.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	_____
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.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	_____

(cont.)

Executive Skills Questionnaire for Students (page 2 of 2)

- | Item | Score |
|---|-------|
| 19. My backpack and notebooks are disorganized. | _____ |
| 20. My desk or work space at home is a mess. | _____ |
| 21. I have trouble keeping my bedroom tidy. | _____ |
| TOTAL SCORE: | _____ |
| 22. I have a hard time estimating how long it will take to do something (such as homework). | _____ |
| 23. I often don't finish homework at night and rush to get it done in school before class. | _____ |
| 24. I'm slow getting ready for things (e.g., school or appointments). | _____ |
| TOTAL SCORE: | _____ |
| 25. If the first solution to a problem doesn't work, I have trouble thinking of a different one. | _____ |
| 26. It's hard for me to deal with changes in plans or routines. | _____ |
| 27. I have problems with open-ended homework assignments (e.g., don't know what to write about when given a creative writing assignment). | _____ |
| TOTAL SCORE: | _____ |

High School Students Only

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 28. I don't have effective study strategies. | _____ |
| 29. I don't check my work for mistakes even when the stakes are high. | _____ |
| 30. I don't evaluate my performance and change tactics in order to increase success. | _____ |
| TOTAL SCORE: | _____ |
| 31. I can't seem to save up money for a desired object. | _____ |
| 32. I don't see the value in earning good grades to achieve a long-term goal. | _____ |
| 33. If I should be studying and something fun comes up, it's hard for me to make myself study. | _____ |
| TOTAL SCORE: | _____ |

KEY			
Items	Executive Skill	Items	Executive Skill
1-3	Response inhibition	4-6	Working memory
7-9	Emotional control	10-12	Sustained attention
13-15	Task initiation	16-18	Planning/prioritization
19-21	Organization	22-24	Time management
25-27	Flexibility	28-30	Metacognition
31-33	Goal-directed persistence		

Your Executive Skills Strengths

Your Executive Skills Weaknesses



For Parents: What's My Parenting Style?

Read the descriptions and decide which style best reflects the one you use *most of the time*. If you feel you fluctuate between different approaches, select more than one (but no more than three!) and rank-order them, with 1 representing the style you use the most and 3 the least.

Parenting style	Ranking (1-3)
Overinvolved, micromanaging	
Would like to help, but follow-through is inconsistent	
Avoid confrontations at all costs (I know I need to hold my teen accountable, but I can't bring myself to do it)	
Tough love (children need to learn from their mistakes)	
Parents boomerang between overly permissive and punitive	
Parents disagree with each other about how to manage problems	
Authoritative/democratic—involving the teen in decision making and problem solving but also imposing rules and consequences	

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For Teens: What Parenting Style Do My Parents Use?

Read the descriptions and decide which style best reflects the one you think your parents use *most of the time*. If you feel they fluctuate between different approaches, then select more than one (but no more than three!) and rank-order them, with 1 representing the style you use the most and 3 the least.

Parenting style	Ranking (1-3)
Overinvolved, micromanaging	
Would like to help, but follow-through is inconsistent	
Avoid confrontations at all costs (I get away with a lot because they don't have or enforce rules)	
Tough love (children need to learn from their mistakes)	
Parents boomerang between overly permissive and punitive	
Parents disagree with each other about how to manage problems	
Authoritative/democratic—they involve me in decision making and problem solving but also impose rules and consequences	

From *Smart but Scattered Teens*. Copyright 2013 by The Guilford Press.



Understanding Executive Function Skills in Yourself and Your Child

Assessing executive abilities in both yourself and your child is a valuable exercise that provides insights into shared strengths and weaknesses, as well as areas where differences may exist. Executive skills are vital cognitive capabilities that involve planning, organizing, time management, sustained attention, cognitive flexibility, emotional regulation, and more.

After completing a self-assessment and evaluating your child's executive function skills, review the outcomes to pinpoint areas of strength and weakness. You can then compare these against the provided definitions and examples of strengths and weaknesses in executive skills. Do these align with the perceived strengths and weaknesses for both you and your child?

Overview of Executive Function Skills

Skill	Definition	Strengths	Weaknesses
Response Inhibition	The ability to resist impulsive behaviors or automatic responses.	Being able to think before acting, making thoughtful decisions.	Difficulty controlling impulses, acting without considering consequences.
Working Memory	The capacity to hold and manipulate information in mind for short periods.	Being able to follow multi-step instructions, remembering information.	Struggling to remember and apply information, easily getting distracted.
Emotional Control	The ability to manage and regulate emotions in various situations.	Remaining calm and composed, effectively dealing with stress.	Difficulty controlling emotions, easily becoming overwhelmed or frustrated.
Task Initiation	The ability to manage and regulate emotions in various situations.	Remaining calm and composed, effectively dealing with stress.	Difficulty controlling emotions, easily becoming overwhelmed or frustrated.



Skill	Definition	Strengths	Weaknesses
Sustained Attention	The ability to maintain focus and concentration over an extended period.	Staying engaged in tasks, completing them without distractions.	Getting easily bored or distracted, difficulty staying on task.
Planning/Prioritization	The ability to set goals, create plans, and prioritize tasks.	Being organized, effectively managing time and resources.	Difficulty creating plans, struggling to prioritize tasks effectively.
Organization	The ability to create and maintain order and structure.	Keeping track of materials, maintaining a tidy workspace.	Being disorganized, struggling to find and manage belongings.
Time Management	The ability to estimate, allocate, and utilize time effectively.	Meeting deadlines, effectively managing time for tasks and activities.	Difficulty estimating time, frequently running late or feeling rushed.
Flexibility	The ability to adapt to changing situations and adjust strategies.	Being open-minded, adapting to new circumstances easily.	Struggling with changes, being resistant to new ideas or routines.
Metacognition	The ability to reflect on and monitor one's own thinking processes.	Being self-aware, recognizing strengths and weaknesses.	Difficulty reflecting on one's own thinking, not recognizing when strategies are ineffective.
Goal-Directed Persistence.	The ability to stay focused and persevere in achieving long-term goals.	Being determined, not giving up easily, and working consistently	Easily giving up, lacking motivation or persistence in pursuing goals.



These executive function skills are crucial for academic success, personal growth, and overall well-being. Recognizing and developing these skills can significantly benefit individuals across various areas of their lives.

Understanding your strengths and weaknesses in executive skills can lead to more effective support and growth for both you and your child. By comparing scores in these skill areas, you can gain valuable insights into shared strengths and weaknesses while addressing any differences that may exist. Identifying these areas can help leverage shared abilities and address common challenges, fostering better understanding and support within your family.

Navigating Differences in Strengths and Weaknesses

It's crucial to acknowledge that tension can emerge when a strength in one individual aligns with a weakness in another. Understanding this dynamic is key, as the person excelling in a specific area might find it perplexing why it presents a difficulty for the other person. This awareness is pivotal in enhancing communication and support within your relationship, nurturing a deeper comprehension of each other's needs and avenues for development.

Here are some examples of common conflicts and ways to resolve them:

1. Time Management:

- **Conflict:** Parents who excel at meeting deadlines and managing tasks might find it challenging when their child struggles with time management, often running late or feeling overwhelmed by deadlines.
- **Resolution:** Parents can assist their child by teaching them time management strategies like setting priorities, creating schedules, and using time-management tools. Providing support and guidance can help the child improve their time management skills.

2. Organization:

- **Conflict:** Parents who are organized may have trouble understanding why their child frequently runs late or feels overwhelmed by deadlines.
- **Resolution:** Parents can help their child develop organizational skills by creating to-do lists, breaking tasks into smaller steps, and using organizational tools. Clear communication of expectations and guidance when needed can be beneficial.

3. Task Initiation:

- **Conflict:** Parents who are motivated and proactive in starting tasks may struggle to understand why their child has difficulty initiating tasks, experiences delays, and finds it challenging to begin tasks.
- **Resolution:** Parents can support their child by providing motivation, breaking tasks into smaller steps, and helping them overcome barriers in initiating tasks. Setting realistic expectations and offering support when necessary can aid the child in task initiation.



Understanding the Overlap Between ADHD and Executive Function Skills

Introduction

As a parent, it is important to understand the relationship between Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Executive Function Skills. ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder that affects a child's ability to regulate attention, behavior, and impulses. Executive Function Skills, on the other hand, refer to a set of cognitive processes that help individuals manage and control their thoughts, actions, and emotions. In this handout, we will explore how ADHD and Executive Function Skills overlap and provide strategies to support your child in developing these skills.

The Connection Between ADHD and Executive Function Skills

ADHD and Executive Function Skills are closely intertwined. Many of the challenges faced by individuals with ADHD can be attributed to difficulties in executive functioning. Let's explore some of the key areas where ADHD and Executive Function Skills overlap:

Attention

ADHD is characterized by difficulties in sustaining attention and staying focused. This directly impacts a child's ability to concentrate on tasks, follow instructions, and complete assignments. Attention is a crucial component of executive functioning, as it allows individuals to filter out distractions, prioritize tasks, and maintain focus.

Working Memory

Working memory refers to the ability to hold and manipulate information in the mind over short periods. Individuals with ADHD often struggle with working memory, which can make it challenging for them to remember and apply information, follow multi-step instructions, and organize their thoughts. Working memory is an essential executive function skill that supports learning, problem-solving, and decision-making.



Organization and Time Management

Executive Function Skills play a vital role in organizing thoughts, materials, and tasks. Children with ADHD may have difficulties in planning and prioritizing tasks, keeping track of assignments, and maintaining an organized workspace. Time management is also a significant challenge, as individuals with ADHD may struggle to estimate how long tasks will take, allocate time effectively, and meet deadlines.

Task Initiation and Completion

Initiating tasks and staying on track can be particularly challenging for individuals with ADHD. They may struggle with getting started on assignments, transitioning from one activity to another, and breaking tasks into manageable steps. Task completion can also be an obstacle, as individuals with ADHD may become overwhelmed by the requirements of a task or lose focus before completing it.

Self-Regulation and Emotional Control

Self-regulation is an executive function skill that involves managing behavior, emotions, and impulses. Children with ADHD may struggle with self-regulation, leading to impulsive behavior, difficulty controlling emotions, and challenges with self-control. These difficulties can impact social interactions, academic performance, and overall well-being.

Cognitive Flexibility

Cognitive flexibility refers to the ability to adapt and shift thinking or strategies when faced with changing situations or tasks. Individuals with ADHD may have difficulties with cognitive flexibility, leading to rigid thinking patterns and difficulties adjusting to new information or instructions. This can hinder problem-solving, decision-making, and adapting to new environments.



	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"> • Has a hard time paying attention • Has difficulty with self-control • Has trouble managing emotions • Has difficulty holding information in working memory • Has trouble switching easily from one activity to another • Has trouble getting started on tasks • Has problems organizing time or materials • Has difficulty keeping track of what's going on • Has difficulty completing long-term projects • Has trouble with thinking before acting • Is easily distracted and often forgetful • Doesn't seem to listen when spoken to • Has trouble taking turns • Fidgets excessively • Acts as if "driven by a motor" • Interrupts others and talks excessively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a hard time paying attention • Has difficulty with self-control • Has trouble managing emotions • Has difficulty holding information in working memory • Has trouble switching easily from one activity to another • Has trouble getting started on tasks • Has problems organizing time and materials • Has difficulty keeping track of what's going on • Has difficulty completing long-term projects • Has trouble with thinking before acting • Is easily distracted and often forgetful • Has trouble taking turns • Has problems remembering assigned tasks



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



The Development of Your Child's Brain: A Fascinating Journey

Did you know that your child's brain continues to mature as they grow older? **It's a fascinating process that takes time, and their brain isn't fully developed until they reach the age of 25.** During these years, their brain undergoes various changes and refinements, shaping their abilities, emotions, and decision-making skills.

The brain goes through a complex series of developments, including the growth of neural connections, the formation of new pathways, and the pruning of unused connections. These processes contribute to the development of various cognitive functions, such as memory, attention, language, and problem-solving.

As your child's brain develops, their abilities and skills also progress. They become better at regulating their emotions, making decisions, and understanding the consequences of their actions. Additionally, their executive function skills, which include skills like planning, organizing, and focusing, continue to improve.



Executive age is the child's age based on how his or her brain is working. ADHD children and adults are an average of 30% behind in their executive age. This includes their ability to regulate their emotions, body, impulses, social awareness, and general maturity. It can be even greater than 30% depending on the person. This delay will last into adulthood and affect relationships and careers. Human brains reach their highest point of maturity in the early 30, and for ADHD people, that is where the maturity stops, even if they are delayed.

True Age	Executive Age	True Age	Executive Age	True Age	Executive Age
3	2	13	8.67	23	15.33
4	2.67	14	9.33	24	16
5	3.333	15	10	25	16.67
6	4	16	10.67	26	17.33
7	4.67	17	11.33	27	18
8	5.33	18	12	28	18.67
9	6	19	12.67	29	19.33
10	6.67	20	13.33	30	20
11	7.33	21	14	31	20.67
12	8	22	14.67	32	21.33

When your children frustrate you with actions that are not age appropriate, refer to this chart to remind you to give them grace because their brains are developing behind schedule.

However, it's essential to note that every child is unique, and some may face additional challenges along the way. For children with ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), their executive function skills might develop at a different pace compared to their peers without ADHD. These children may experience a delay of up to 30% in their executive function skills compared to their actual age.

Understanding the intricacies of your child's brain development can help you provide them with the necessary support and interventions to optimize their growth and ensure their overall well-being.

The Importance of Executive Function Skills

Executive function skills play a critical role in a child's development and academic success. These skills involve the ability to plan, organize, prioritize, pay attention, and control impulses. **As parents, it is natural to want to share our knowledge and experiences with our children when they face challenges. However, it is important to understand that children may not always be looking for advice, and there is a learning process that takes time for both parents and children.**

One key aspect to consider is brain maturation. The development of executive function skills takes place over many years as the brain continues to develop and mature. **This means that children need time and practice to acquire these vital skills.** There are no shortcuts or quick fixes when it comes to building executive function abilities.

Parents can support the development of executive function skills by creating a conducive environment. Establishing routines and providing clear expectations can help children learn to plan and organize their tasks. Encouraging children to break down big tasks into smaller, manageable steps can also help them develop their ability to prioritize.

Another important aspect of executive function skills is attention control. Helping children understand how to manage their attention and avoid distractions can greatly enhance their ability to stay focused on tasks. Teaching them techniques such as mindfulness and setting aside dedicated study time can be beneficial in this regard.

Additionally, allowing children to make decisions and solve problems on their own can foster their independence and critical thinking skills. **While it may be tempting for parents to provide quick solutions, giving children the space to figure things out themselves can help them develop their problem-solving abilities.**

It is also **important to remember that executive function skills are not solely developed in the academic setting.** Engaging children in activities that require planning, such as organizing a family outing or managing their own schedule, can provide valuable opportunities for them to practice and strengthen their executive function skills.

In conclusion, executive function skills are essential for a child's overall development and academic success. **As parents, it is important to recognize that there are no shortcuts or quick fixes in acquiring these skills.** By creating a supportive environment, providing opportunities for practice, and allowing children to take ownership of their decisions, parents can help nurture and develop their child's executive function skills. Remember, it's a journey that takes time, patience, and consistent effort.



Executive Functioning Skill Development by Age

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

Supporting Your Child's Executive Function Skills

As a parent, there are several strategies you can implement to support your child in developing their executive function skills:

1. **Establish routines and structure:** Create a consistent daily routine and provide clear expectations for tasks and activities. This helps your child develop a sense of organization and time management.
2. **Break tasks into smaller steps:** Help your child break down tasks into manageable steps. This makes it easier for them to initiate and complete tasks without feeling overwhelmed.
3. **Use visual aids and reminders:** Visual aids, such as calendars, to-do lists, and visual schedules, can assist your child in organizing their thoughts and managing their time effectively. Reminders and alarms can also help them stay on track.
4. **Provide clear instructions and expectations:** When giving instructions, be clear, concise, and specific. Break down complex instructions into smaller, simpler steps to facilitate understanding and task completion.
5. **Encourage self-reflection and self-monitoring:** Teach your child to reflect on their actions, emotions, and behaviors. Encourage them to identify strategies that work best for them and monitor their progress towards goals.
6. **Foster a supportive and structured learning environment:** Create a quiet and organized workspace for your child to minimize distractions. Establish consistent study routines and provide regular breaks to maintain focus and attention.
7. **Teach problem-solving and decision-making skills:** Help your child develop problem-solving and decision-making skills by encouraging them to think critically, consider alternatives, and evaluate consequences. This promotes cognitive flexibility and adaptive thinking.
8. **Promote healthy lifestyle habits:** Ensure your child gets enough sleep, eats a balanced diet, and engages in regular physical activity. These factors contribute to overall well-being and can positively impact executive function skills.
9. **Collaborate with teachers and professionals:** Maintain open communication with your child's teachers and seek support from professionals, such as psychologists or occupational therapists, who can provide additional strategies and interventions.



Activities That Help Teach Executive Function Skills

Remember, every child with ADHD is unique, and their needs may vary. It is essential to tailor strategies to your child's specific strengths and challenges. By understanding the overlap between ADHD and Executive Function Skills and implementing appropriate support, you can help your child thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

There are many activities that can engage children in practicing executive function skills outside of school. Here are a few examples:

1. **Board games:** Playing board games requires planning, organizing, and strategizing. Games like chess, Monopoly, and Scrabble can help children develop their executive function skills while having fun.
2. **Sports:** Participating in team sports or individual sports requires children to follow instructions, manage their time, and make decisions in a fast-paced environment. Sports can help improve their ability to prioritize, control impulses, and work collaboratively with others.
3. **Cooking or baking:** Following a recipe, measuring ingredients, and timing the cooking process all involve executive function skills. Encouraging children to help in the kitchen can enhance their ability to plan, organize, and stay focused on a task.
4. **Arts and crafts:** Engaging in arts and crafts activities like painting, drawing, or building models can help children develop their attention control and problem-solving skills. These activities require them to follow instructions, think creatively, and make decisions.
5. **Outdoor exploration:** Going on nature walks, hikes, or exploring new environments can provide children with opportunities to practice their executive function skills. They can plan their route, navigate their way, and make decisions about what to explore or investigate.
6. **Music lessons:** Learning to play a musical instrument or taking vocal lessons can support the development of executive function skills. Playing an instrument requires focus, attention, and the ability to follow instructions and practice regularly.
7. **Household chores:** Assigning age-appropriate household chores to children can help them develop their executive function skills. Tasks like organizing their room, doing laundry, or making a grocery list require planning, organizing, and prioritizing.
8. **Journaling:** Encouraging children to keep a journal or a diary can help them develop their ability to reflect, set goals, and manage their time. Writing down their thoughts, experiences, and plans can enhance their executive function skills.

Remember, the key is to provide children with opportunities to practice these skills in a supportive and engaging manner. By incorporating these activities into their daily routine, parents can help nurture and strengthen their child's executive function skills outside of school.

Worksheet: Managing ADHD and Executive Function Skills

Instructions: Read each scenario below and answer the questions based on your understanding of ADHD and executive function skills.

Scenario 1:

Emma often forgets to bring her homework to school. She also struggles with completing her assignments on time. Her desk and backpack are always messy, making it difficult for her to find her materials. She often gets distracted during class and has trouble paying attention to the teacher.

1. Which symptoms or difficulties of ADHD does Emma exhibit?
2. Which executive function skills does Emma struggle with?
3. Suggest two strategies that Emma can use to help manage her difficulties.
 - a) _____
 - b) _____

Scenario 2:

Jake has trouble keeping track of his schedule and often forgets important appointments or deadlines. He has difficulty planning and organizing his tasks, leading to last-minute cramming and poor performance on tests. He often interrupts others during conversations and has difficulty waiting for his turn.

1. Which symptoms or difficulties of ADHD does Jake exhibit?
2. Which executive function skills does Jake struggle with?
3. Suggest two strategies that Jake can use to help manage his difficulties.
 - a) _____
 - b) _____



Here are some educational websites that provide resources and information on ADHD and executive function skills:

1. Understood (www.understood.org)
 - Understood is a comprehensive website that offers resources, articles, and practical tips for supporting students with learning and attention issues, including ADHD and executive function difficulties. They provide a range of resources for parents, educators, and students.
2. CHADD (www.chadd.org)
 - CHADD (Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder) is a leading nonprofit organization that provides information, advocacy, and support for individuals with ADHD. Their website offers resources, articles, and webinars related to ADHD, including executive function skills.
3. National Resource Center on ADHD (www.help4adhd.org)
 - The National Resource Center on ADHD, a program of CHADD, is dedicated to providing evidence-based information and resources on ADHD. Their website offers articles, fact sheets, and toolkits on various topics related to ADHD, including executive function skills.
4. ADDitude (www.additudemag.com)
 - ADDitude is an online magazine that focuses on issues related to ADHD and related conditions. Their website offers articles, webinars, and expert advice on managing ADHD and improving executive function skills. They also have a section specifically for educators.
5. LD Online (www.ldonline.org)
 - LD Online is a website that provides information and resources for individuals with learning disabilities. While it covers a wide range of learning difficulties, it also has resources specifically related to ADHD and executive function skills. Their articles and resources can be useful for educators and parents.

Please note that while these websites offer valuable resources, it's important to review the content and adapt it to suit the specific needs and age group of your students.



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