

Table 24.1 Executive Skills Definitions		
Executive Skill	Definition	Examples
Response Inhibition:	The capacity to think before you act. This ability to resist the urge to say or do something allows the child the time to evaluate a situation and how his or her behavior might impact it.	A young child can wait for a short period without being disruptive. An adolescent can accept a referee's call without an argument.
Working Memory	The ability to hold information in memory while performing complex tasks. It incorporates the ability to draw on past learning or experience to apply to the situation at hand or to project into the future.	A young child can hold in mind and follow one or two-step directions. The middle school child can remember the expectations of multiple teachers.
Emotional Control	The ability to manage emotions to achieve goals, complete tasks, or control and direct behavior.	The ability to manage emotions to achieve goals, complete tasks, or control and direct behavior.
Flexibility	The ability to revise plans in the face of obstacles, setbacks, new information, or mistakes. It relates to an adaptability to changing conditions.	A young child can adjust to a change in plans without major distress. A teenager can accept an alternative such as a different job when the first choice is not available.
Sustained Attention	The capacity to keep paying attention to a situation or task in spite of distractibility, fatigue, or boredom.	For a younger child an example is completing a 5-minute chore with occasional supervision. A teenager can pay attention to homework, with short breaks, for 1–2 hours.

Task Initiation	The ability to begin projects without undue procrastination, in an efficient or timely fashion.	A young child is able to start a chore or assignment right after instructions are given. A teenager does not wait until the last minute to begin a project.
Planning & Prioritizing	The Ability to create a roadmap to reach a goal or to complete a task. It also involves being able to make decisions about what is important to focus on and what is not important.	A young child, with coaching, can think of options to settle a peer conflict. A teenager can formulate a plan to get a job.
Organization	A young child, with coaching, can think of options to settle a peer conflict. A teenager can formulate a plan to get a job.	A young child, with coaching, can think of options to settle a peer conflict. A teenager can formulate a plan to get a job.
Time Management	The capacity to estimate how much time one has, how to allocate it, and how to stay within time limits and deadlines. It also involves a sense that time is important.	The capacity to estimate how much time one has, how to allocate it, and how to stay within time limits and deadlines. It also involves a sense that time is important.
Goal Directed Assistance	The capacity to have a goal, follow through to the completion of the goal, and not be put off by or distracted by competing interests.	The capacity to have a goal, follow through to the completion of the goal, and not be put off by or distracted by competing interests.
Metacognition	The capacity to have a goal, follow through to the completion of the goal, and not be put off by or distracted by competing interests.	A young child can change behavior in response to feedback from an adult. A teenager can monitor and critique performance and improve it by observing others who are more skilled.