

# Executive Functioning

Executive Functioning skills are the set of cognitive processes that allow for organization and connection of thoughts.

<p><b>Self-Control</b></p> <p>Ability to stop and think before responding.</p>	<p><b>Task Initiation</b></p> <p>Ability to take action on a task or goal.</p>
<p><b>Self-Monitor</b></p> <p>Ability to self-evaluate work and behavior.</p>	<p><b>Organization</b></p> <p>Ability to create a system to organize items and information needed for a task.</p>
<p><b>Planning and Prioritizing</b></p> <p>Ability to create steps to reach goals and prioritize those goals/needs.</p>	<p><b>Working Memory</b></p> <p>Ability to keep and recall important information in short term memory.</p>
<p><b>Flexibility</b></p> <p>Ability to adapt to changes in expectations and routines by revising plans and strategies.</p>	<p><b>Time Management</b></p> <p>Ability to manage time as it relates to goals and needs.</p>

What does it look like?

- Easily emotional or overwhelmed
- Struggles to focus on tasks
- Needs frequent reminders to complete task
- Misplaces personal items frequently
- Ridged thinking
- Struggles with changes to routine and expectation
- Struggles to problem solve independently
- Impulsive responses to changes to routine or expectations



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## How can I help my child?

### Planning:

- Create routines and practice them often.
- Make to-do lists or visual schedules for daily tasks.
- Start your day discussing/viewing the plan for the day.
- Use a calendar or planner for your child's activities and events.
- Create visual/written task list
- Talk through/make a plan for expectations and items needed for events.

### Organization:

- Create spaces for in your home for daily used items, so they can be easily found/put away.
- Model and practice putting away items after using them.
- Give all items a "home" or a location that they are expected to be found/put away.
- Minimize clutter in work spaces.

### Task Initiation:

- Keep plans simple, and task requests to one at a time.
- Break down large tasks to small simple tasks.
- Give brain breaks between tasks.
- Encourage task to include a peer or sibling.
- Write down instructions/expectations for visual reminder.
- Encourage exercise or physical movement into day, specifically before a task that requires a great deal of focus.
- Do challenging task together or paired with a sibling/peer.

### Working Memory:

- Create mantras and mnemonics to help remember important information.
- Use visual aids to help with memory.
- Write down instructions or task expectations.
- Give wait time when answering questions.

### Self-Monitor:

- Discuss and reflect on decisions (negative and positive) often.
- Break down large task into small goals over time, use planner/calendar to monitor progress.

### Self-Control:

- Teach and practice coping skills for managing stress.
- Practice mindfulness.
- Complete feelings "check-ins" often.

### Flexibility:

- Teach problem solving skills.
- Give warnings before transitions.
- Discuss plans and changes right away.
- "Game Plan" for what to expect in situations and how changes can be managed.

### Time Management

- Reduce distractions.
- Use timers for time reminders.
- Use countdowns and time checks.
- Use visual schedules for reminders of routine and expectations.
- Build in breaks to routines.



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