

An Introduction to Executive Functioning- Learning and Behavior

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Notes and Key Ideas:

Executive Skills Required for Independent Seat Work and Homework

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Task	Executive Skill
A. Understanding directions	
B. Getting started on his or her own	
C. Being able to keep working despite distractions	
D. Asking for help when it's needed	
E. Sticking with it long enough to complete it	
F. Making careless mistakes, failing to check work	
G. Finishing the work on time	
H. Remembering to hand it in on time	

Eleven Executive Functions of the Brain¹

1. **Metacognition (M)** Self-talk; ability to observe your own problem solving; self-reflection; self-evaluating; thinking about your thinking
2. **Task initiation (TI)** Getting started on your own; no procrastination; combines with metacognition and the ability to delay gratification
3. **Sustained attention (SA)** Staying on the "right" task; ability to ignore distractions
4. **Goal-directed persistence (GDF)** Sticking with a task to completion; determination; not giving into distractions
5. **Working memory (WM)** Keeping information in mind while doing a complex task; following multistep directions; drawing on past learning to solve present problems; ability to imagine problem solving strategies into the future; remembering auditory directions
6. **Flexibility (F)** Adaptable; able to change tempo, problem solve, and shift focus to meet demands
7. **Planning and prioritization (P)** Break down a task or goal into steps to complete a project over time; able to choose the order of important tasks to complete first
8. **Time management (TM)** Allotting time to meet deadlines; estimating the time to complete a task; able to get work done and have time for fun
9. **Organization (O)** Organize our thoughts for writing essays and reports; organizing our belongings/papers/room so we can find things easily
10. **Response inhibition (RI)** Thinking before you act or speak; staying calm under pressure
11. **Emotional control (EC)** Manage emotions to reach a goal; to control or direct behavior

Time Tools to See Time

Where do I need analog clocks:

When could I use a timer?

Where do I need monthly calendars?

How could I use a dry erase board?

Resources

- Barkley, R. (2012). *Executive Functions: What They Are, How They Work, and Why They Evolved*. The Guilford Press. New York.
- Dawson, P. and Guare, R. (2012). *Coaching Students with Executive Functioning Deficits*. The Guilford Press. New York.
- Dawson, P. and Guare, R. (2010). *Executive Skills in Children & Adolescents. A Practical Guide to Assessment and Intervention*. The Guilford Press. New York.
- Levine, M. (1990). *Keeping a Head in School*. Educator's Publishing Service, Inc. Cambridge & Toronto.
- Margulies, N. (2002). *Mapping Inner Space: Learning and Visual Mapping*. (2nd Ed). Corwin Press. Thousand Oaks.
- Medina, J. *Brain Rules*.
- Sklar, M. (2014). *50 Tips to Help Students Succeed*. Aguanga Publishing. Portland Oregon.

Executive Functions Explained for Parents

Cooper-Kahn, J., and Dietzel, L. 2008. *Late, Lost, and Unprepared: A Parent's Guide to Helping Children with Executive Functioning*. Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House.

Cox, A. 2007. *No Mind Left Behind: Understanding and Fostering Executive Control—The Eight Essential Brain Skills Every Child Needs to Thrive*. New York: Penguin.

Dawson, P., and Guare, R. 2009. *Smart but Scattered: The Revolutionary "Executive Skills" Approach to Helping Children Reach Their Potential*. New York: The Guilford Press.

———. 2012. *Smart but Scattered Teens: The "Executive Skills" Program for Helping Children Reach Their Potential*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Websites for Additional Information and Resources

The International Dyslexia Association, www.interdys.org

Provides resources for professionals and families dealing with individuals with reading disabilities. The national website and the state branches all have listings of tutors trained to help those with dyslexia.

CHADD, www.chadd.org

Nationally recognized authority on ADHD.

The Association of Educational Therapists, www.aetonline.org

Provides information on educational therapy and lists trained educational therapists to assist those struggling with learning.

LearnNet, www.projectlearnnet.org

This is a great resource for information about the brain in general and for supporting those with brain injuries. Contains information for teachers, clinicians, parents, and students.

Dr. David Walsh, www.drdavewalsh.com

Resources and blogs for “mind-positive parenting.”

Executive Functioning Success, www.executivefunctioningsuccess.com

Marydee Sklar’s website has blog tips on supporting EF skills, videos, and links to Cool Tools to support time management, plus access to information about The Sklar Process® and the “Seeing My Time” courses for families, individuals, and schools.