



WHAT ARE EXECUTIVE FUNCTION SKILLS?

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EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING: This term is used to describe the many tasks one's brain performs that are necessary to think, act, and solve problems. Executive functioning includes tasks that help us learn new information, remember and retrieve information we've learned in the past, and use this information to solve problems of everyday life. A child's executive functioning skills make it possible for him or her to function in a manner consistent for the child's age.

»» **WORKING MEMORY:** skills that help a child keep information in mind while using that information to complete a task. Working memory allows a child to pay attention, plan ahead, solve problems, and organize.

- **ACADEMIC IMPACT:** Intact working memory is important for classroom lessons such as keeping instructions in mind while executing them and recalling the sequence of a story.
- Intact working memory allows a student to complete the task or project without forgetting.

»» **EMOTIONAL CONTROL:** The ability to modulate and manage an emotional response; school age children need to compromise, share, and accept losing.

Self-regulation is the ability to control one's impulses. Well-developed regulation allows children to sit and stand when needed, talk quietly when required, and sleep when it is time.

- **ACADEMIC IMPACT:** A young child should be able to take turns, an older child should be able to manage the disappointment of losing. Intact emotional control keeps a student from melting down when others modify expectations or routines. A student with well-developed emotional and self-control has greater access to the educational opportunities at school.

»» **SUSTAINED ATTENTION:** This refers to the child's ability to continuously pay attention to a task or activity. Young children should be able to place books on a shelf and toys in a basket for about 5 minutes. An older child can complete one hour of homework with brief breaks.

- **ACADEMIC IMPACT:** Allows a child to start and continue school work without the need for ongoing prompting. A student with poor attention may not achieve optimal arousal; may appear restless and fidget. Such behavior is disruptive to the learning process. Even young children can use strategies to achieve or maintain self-regulation and better focus.