



DEVELOPING EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS

Executive functioning is the complex mental process that allows us to plan, focus, remember, set goals, and complete tasks.

Executive Functioning Skills:

- Attention
- Following directions
- Memory
- Organization
- Self-awareness, Self-Regulation

Examples of School-Related Executive Functioning Tasks:

- Focusing on a lecture
- Completing homework or other independent tasks
- Completing work within a given time limit
- Organizing school materials
- Following schedule
- Remembering educational content

Signs of Executive Functioning Difficulties:

- Difficulty controlling impulses and emotions
- Difficulty with time-management
- Trouble multitasking
- Struggles to pay attention
- Difficulties starting and completing tasks
- Disorganization
- May show some inappropriate social behaviors



HOW YOU HELP YOUR CHILD WITH EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS:

Attention:

- Setting time limits to complete tasks
- Play games that require quick responses (slap jack, perfection, red light green light, musical chairs, duck duck goose, Simon says, four square, organized sports, etc.)
- Playing games with sustained attention (word finds, I-spy, matching games)
- Yoga, Meditation

Memory

- Use a planner
- Play games that involve a memory component (matching games, go fish, old maid, etc.)
- Call and response songs
- Clapping rhythms/songs like Miss Mary Mack
- Play games that have rules Slowly decrease how much adult enforces rules and encourage child to do so

Self-Awareness, Self-Regulation

- Sensory Strategies
- Role Playing, Social Stories
- Yoga/Meditation
- Deep breathing
- Label emotions seen in a book/movie and identify matching body language

Organization:

- Color coded folders for school
- Separate items by similar characteristics (color, size, shape, etc.)
- Use of visuals such as a visual list for what belongs in their backpack

Following Directions:

- Provide simple, step-by-step directions
- Gain their attention before providing directions
- Following recipes, fulfilling orders
- Making a craft from directions
- Playing board/card games (Sorry!, Uno, Monopoly, etc.)
- Play games with clear and changing rules (Simon says, red light green light, etc.)