

Developmental Progression of Executive Skills
(Smart but Scattered by Peg Dawson, EdD and Richard Guare, PhD.)

<u>Executive Skill</u>	<u>Definition</u>	<u>Example</u>	<u>Strategy</u>
Response Inhibition (Developed in early childhood)	Think before you act. Resist the urge to say or do something	Waiting turn Not Arguing with adult.	Calming Activities Mindfulness Visual Reminders Coaching and Feedback
Working Memory (Developed in early childhood and continues to develop throughout adolescents/early adulthood)	The ability to hold information in your memory while performing complex tasks. Ability to draw on past learning or experiences to apply to situation at hand.	Young children can follow 1 to 2 step directions. Middle School Student can remember the expectations of multiple teachers and steps.	Use checklist and other visual organizers. Provide visual example of expected outcome. Use Collaborative Problem Solving Strategies. Make a Plan
Emotional Control (Developed in early childhood and continues throughout adolescents/early adulthood).	Ability to manage emotions to achieve our goals, complete tasks and direct behaviors.	Ability to recover from disappointment in a short time. A teenager can manage anxiety of a game or test.	Calming Activities Make a Plan Collaborative Problem Solving Sensory Diet
Sustained Attention (Developed in early childhood and continues throughout adolescents/early adulthood)	Keep paying attention to a task in spite of distractibility, fatigue and boredom.	Middle School Student – Ability to complete assignment, listen to discussion and stay focused on teacher. Remain alert.	Sit close to teacher or with on task peers. Decreased distractions in room (lights/fans etc). Check in with student after directions are given to determine if they have all steps. Provide sensory diet/breaks.
Task Initiation (Developed in childhood and continues throughout adolescents/early adulthood.	The ability to begin projects without undue procrastination in an efficient or timely manner.	A young child can start a chore or assignment right after it is given. A teen does not wait until the last minute to start a project.	Take a step by step approach to work; rely on visual organizers. Make task as concrete (black/white) as possible. Check for understanding. Manage with time.
Planning/Prioritization (Developed in childhood and continues through young adulthood).	Create a roadmap to reach a goal or complete a task. 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 teen can formulate a plan to get a job, make a plan for weekend activities with friends.	Use visuals such as a calendar, planner or other tool to create a plan. Plan out the assignments in a step by step approach/including materials needed with visual deadlines for each step. (Calendar) Pair with highly organized peers. Set smaller goals for bigger assignments.

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<p>Organization (Development begins in early childhood and continues to young adulthood).</p>	<p>The ability to create and maintain systems to keep track of information or materials.</p>	<p>A young child with a reminder can put toys in a designated place. A teen can organize their work, keep track of their materials etc.</p>	<p>Create checklists and “to do” lists. Estimate how long tasks will take. Use visual calendars to keep track of long assignments, due dates, and activities. Use management software such as Google Calendar. Write due date at the top of each assignment. Organize classroom so that there are clear spaces to turn in work. Schedule weekly times to clean and organize workspaces.</p>
<p>Time Management (Development begins in early childhood and continues to young adulthood).</p>	<p>The ability to estimate how much time something will take, allocate it, and stay within time limits and deadlines.</p>	<p>A young child can complete a short job within a time limit set by adult. A teen can establish a schedule to meet and set task deadlines.</p>	<p>Create check lists and “to do” lists. Break larger assignments down into smaller chunks with due dates. Set time limits for homework. Use a timer for certain students. Use visual calendars with reminders such as Google Calendar.</p>
<p>Goal Directed Persistence (Development begins in childhood and continues into early adulthood).</p>	<p>The ability to make a goal, follow through to completion.</p>	<p>A first grader can complete a job to get recess. A teen can earn and save money to buy something important.</p>	<p>Make a Plan – with timelines. Break bigger goals into smaller segments. Reinforce with check in’s./coaching. Use Google Calendars.</p>
<p>Flexibility (Development begins in childhood and continues into early adulthood).</p>	<p>The ability to revise our schedules, face obstacles, make mistakes, and adapt to change our environment.</p>	<p>A young child can adjust to a change in plans without a major blow out. A teen can accept an alternative such as a different job when first choice is not available.</p>	<p>Prepare students for change by reviewing schedule with visual supports. Use collaborative problem solving to support students voice in making a plan for change. Sensory Diet and breaks to support anxiety and frustrations.</p>
<p>Metacognition (Development begins in childhood and continues to early adulthood).</p>	<p>The ability to think about how you are thinking. Stand back and take a bird-eye view of yourself and self-evaluate. Have perspective.</p>	<p>A young child can change behavior in response to feedback from adult. A teen can monitor and critique their performance and improve it by observing others who are more skilled.</p>	<p>Use strategies such as: Expected vs. Unexpected Social stories Collaborative Problem Solving Social Thinking Bubbles. Break down situation visually with narrative.</p>

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