




Building Blocks to Lifelong Success

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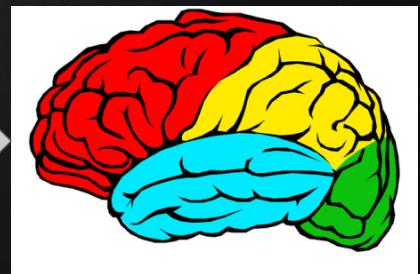
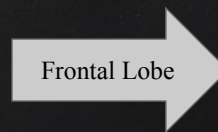


Objectives

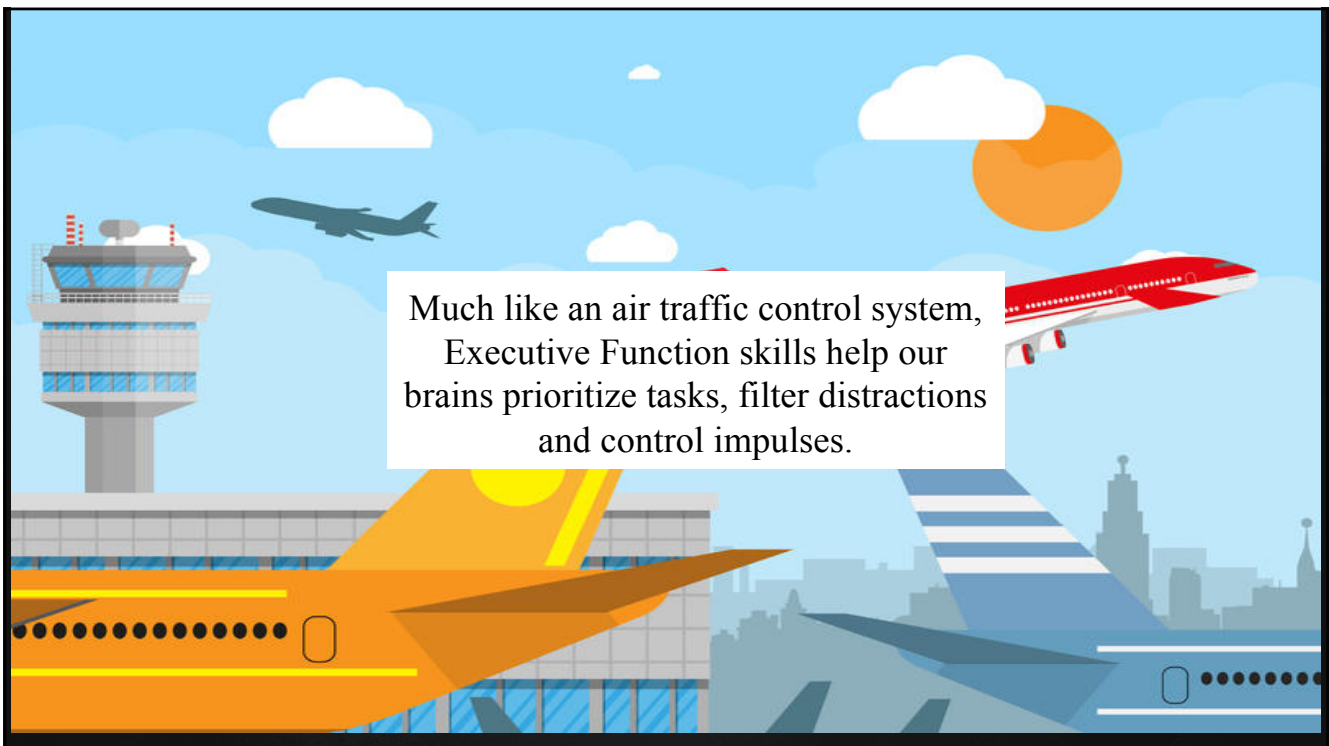
- Participants will learn the definition of executive functioning.
- Participants will recognize how these differences may impact learning and behavior.
- Participants will learn at least 3 simple strategies to address and instruct executive functioning.

What is Executive Functioning

A set of cognitive processes and mental skills that help an individual plan, monitor, and successfully execute their **goals**.



Psychology Today (2020)



Second Step
<https://youtu.be/FZLXggsK6oA>

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING

Flexible Attention

- Shift attention to most important task
- Sustain attention
- Allows us to switch focus quickly from one thing to another

Working Memory

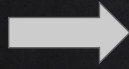
- Ability to remember and use important information

Inhibitory Control

- Pause and Think before we act
- Helps us resist impulses
- Keeps us on task
- Set goals and carry them out

When do Executive Functioning Skills Develop?

- As essential as they are, we aren't born with the skills.
- These skills typically develop most rapidly between ages 3 and 5.
- It takes a long time and a lot of practice to grow executive functioning skills.
- There is another spike during the adolescent and early adult years.



 Center on the Developing Child
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

What might we see with EF deficits?

- Behavior:
 - ◆ The child's actions--usually in relation to their environment or task demands.
- Self regulation:
 - ◆ The ability to obtain, maintain and change one's emotion, behavior, attention and activity level appropriate for a task or situation in a socially acceptable manner.
- Social skills:
 - ◆ Determined by the ability to engage in reciprocal interaction with others
 - ◆ To compromise with others
 - ◆ To be able to recognize and follow social norms.
- Attention and concentration:
 - ◆ Sustained effort
 - ◆ Doing activities without distraction
 - ◆ Being able to hold that effort long enough to get the task done.



EF deficits are strongly associated with components of...

Attention Deficit Disorders	Anxiety	Autism
Depression	Fetal Alcohol Syndrome	Intellectual Disability
Obsessive Compulsive Disorders	Schizophrenia	Social Communication Disorder
Specific Learning Disability	Tourette's Syndrome	Traumatic Brain Injury

A child does NOT have to have a disability to have challenges with EF!

Wilkins & Burmeister (2015)

How do I know if my child has trouble with Executive Functioning?

- Shows little awareness of the process involved in how things happen.
- Have difficulty getting started on a task.
- Live in the current moment and not think for the future or about consequences.
- Be unable to reflect on past experiences to plan for the future.
- Use the same strategy to solve a repeated problem, even if proven ineffective.
- Have difficulty adapting to change.
- Rarely match a strategy to a problem.
- Have low self esteem
- Have difficulty overriding an emotion in order to behave appropriately.
- Locate the source of their troubles outside their control.
- Have a low tolerance for failure.
- Skip steps in a procedure and is baffled when the outcome is not reached.
- Have difficulty putting a sequence of steps in order
- Have difficulty shifting perspectives.
- Need prompting to consider the feelings of others.
- Fail to see the 'big picture' of a task or situation.

Some of these are developmentally appropriate-- Why should I worry?



How does this impact learning and behavior?

During the day a child must...



- Listen to the teacher/parent
- Keep focused despite distractions
- Redirect themselves back to task
- Ask for help when needed
- Remember prior knowledge to complete activity
- Engage appropriately in group setting
- Wait to speak until called on
- Be flexible with changes in activities or schedule
- Control emotions about all of the above



Wilkins & Burmeister (2015)

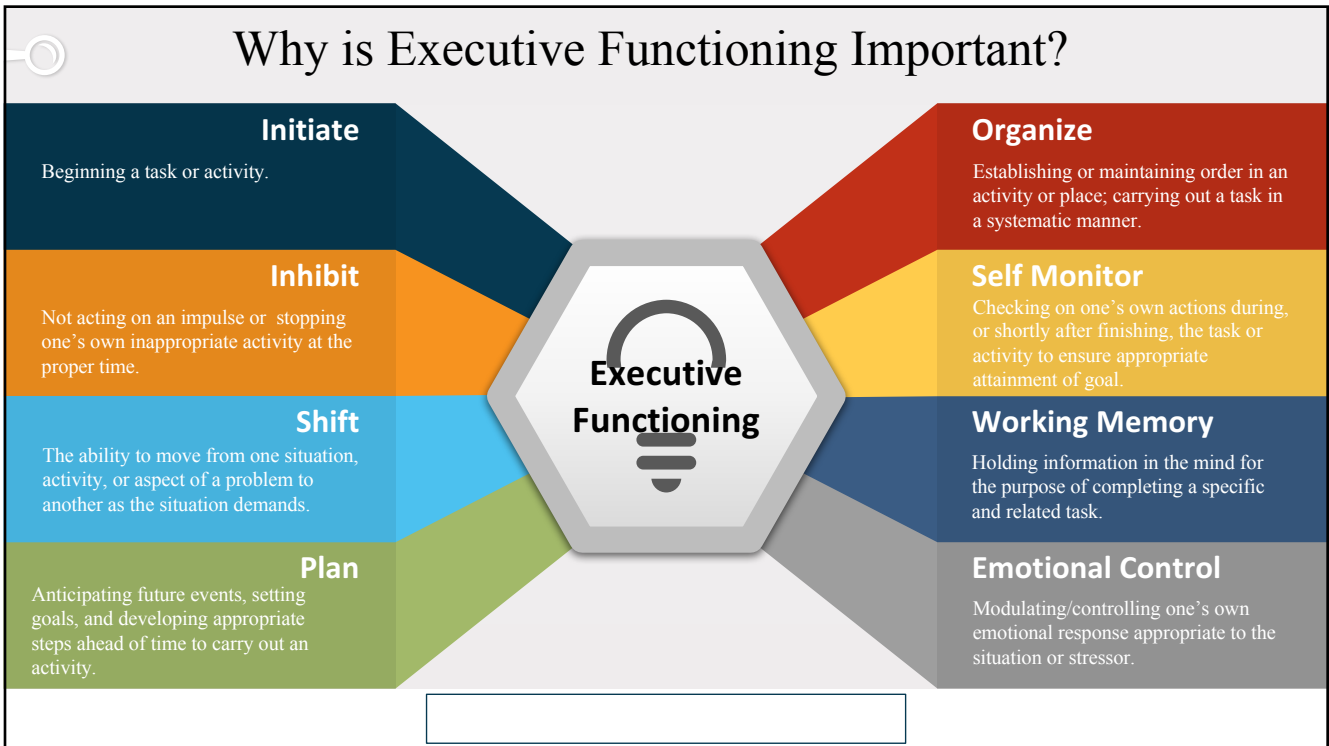
What might this look like at home?

Difficulty with...

- Planning and prioritizing
- Completing tasks
- Sustaining effort
- Storing information in working memory
- Recalling information
- Seeking more information if needed
- Regulating alertness
- Adapting to changes



Wilkins & Burmeister (2015)



So what can we do?



Think about the mental control it takes for a young child to stay “in character” when pretending to be someone else. |

This is great practice in working memory and impulse control. |



So what can we do?

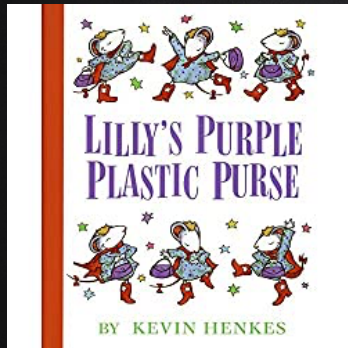
PRETEND PLAY And Role Play



- Children must determine what is needed, hold this information in mind, and then follow through without getting distracted.
- They also exercise selective attention, working memory, and planning.
- If the original plans don't work out, children need to adjust their ideas and try again, challenging their cognitive flexibility.



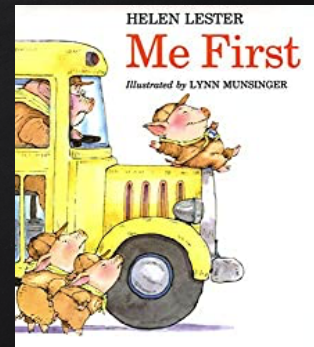
So what can we do?



Lily has trouble wanting to share her new purse at school.



Learning to control yourself.



Being first is not always best!



Encourage Children to tell you stories!

Write them down to read with the child.

Children can also make pictures and create their own books.

Revisiting the story, either by reviewing pictures or words, supports more intentional organization and greater elaboration.





So what can we do?

GAMES

Planning and Problem-Solving Games such as puzzles



Freeze Dance or Simon Says



Specific Interventions

A large graphic with a blue background and various educational icons (lightbulb, globe, ruler, etc.) surrounding the text 'Specific Interventions'.

The Autism Helper. Shared by BB of Cincinnati

"If a child doesn't know how to read,
we teach.
 If a child doesn't know how to swim,
we teach.
 If a child doesn't know how to multiply,
we teach.
 If a child doesn't know how to behave,
we...punish."
 - John Herner

Providing Visual Supports

- Pictures of Expectations
- Schedules
- Only provide needed supplies
- Task Analysis

dramatic play.

I can play in

I can cook.

I can dress up.

I can take care.

I can pretend.

I can talk to my friends.

Grocery list

- corn
- cucumber
- tomatoes
- Lett uce
- skim milk
- fish salmon
- flowers
- avocado
- brooms



CHECKLIST

-
-
-
-

Washing Hands

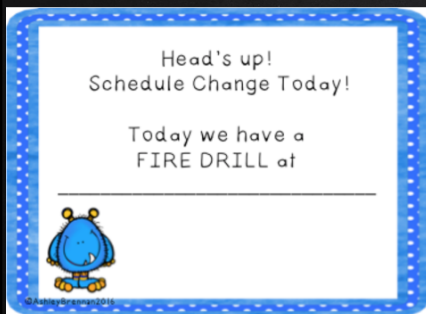
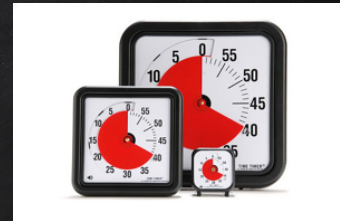
Providing Visual Supports

- Pictures of Expectations--Not just behavioral!



Using Transition Supports

- ★ Count-down timers
- ★ Warning of changes to the schedules
- ★ Change Cards
- ★ Warning of having to stop in the middle of an activity



Consistent Routines

Establish Routines:

- Breakfast
- Bathroom
- Bus/Car Rider Procedure
- Parent Trade-offs for Custody



Changes

Structure the Unstructured:

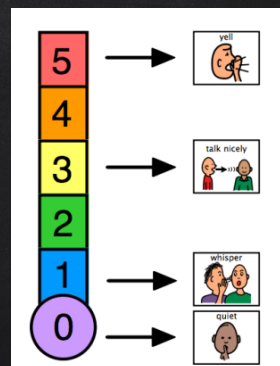
- Provide Options or Choice



Teaching Flexibility

KEY = DIRECT INSTRUCTION

- ✓ Visual Scales
- ✓ Wait Card
- ✓ Power Cards



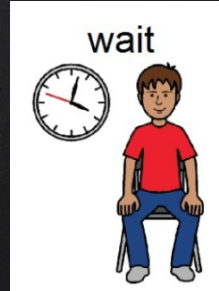
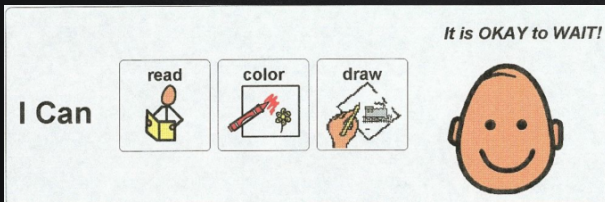
	How I feel	What I can do
5	Panic has set in!	See my teacher. Take a 2 minute walk in the room.
4	I know this stuff but I can't remember.	STOP. Put down my pencil. Put head down and breathe for 30-60 seconds.
3	This test is <u>so</u> hard!	Breathe and try to relax.
2	Okay-I have questions I might double check.	Slow down! Read carefully and look for things I know.
1	Calm- I know this	Keep going!

Wilkins & Burmeister (2015)

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Wilkins & Burmeister (2015)

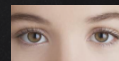
Teaching Flexibility

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Thomas likes it when I...



Look at him



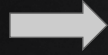
Keep my hands to myself

Wilkins & Burmeister (2015)

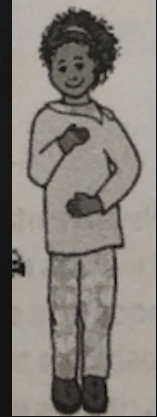
Teaching leveled emotionality

(The ability to emotionally regulate and avoid mood swings)

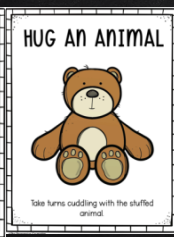
Have to teach....



✓ Calming routines



★ All focus on teaching replacement behaviors



Wilkins & Burmeister (2015)

Teaching Impulse Control

Games to Practice Self-Control
www.thepathway2success.com

- Simon Says
- Blurt
- Role Play
- Wait Five
- Self-Control: The ability to stop and think before making a choice
- Stoplight
- Guard Duty
- Freeze

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Guard Duty

INTRO: "Let's play a game! In this game we'll be practicing our self-control skills. That means our ability to control our own behaviors and movements."

DIRECTIONS: "We will all be pretending we are guards outside the police. We must show we are serious guards by standing up tall and marching in line. Guards never react if someone tries to distract them! I will let you know when to march and when to halt or stop. Are we ready?"

→ Have one leader march around the room with other others following. If someone gets distracted or acts silly, they should go to the back of the line. Let others be the leader, as you see fit. This is also an activity you can use when walking in the hallway!

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Self-Control Questions to Consider:

- What choices could I make right now?
- How could my choices affect others?
- Am I being respectful?
- Am I following the rules?
- Am I being honest?
- What would my future self think about this choice?

Other cards include scenarios like: "Someone tells you that backstabbing is the best way to get ahead. What should you say?" and "Your friend asks what you think of their pants. You don't really like them. What should you say?"

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<https://www.thepathway2success.com/12-games-to-practice-self-control/>

Teaching Impulse Control

10 GAMES

TO IMPROVE
EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING
SKILLS

<https://www.thepathway2success.com/12-games-to-practice-self-control/>

1	BLURT (self-control, metacognition)
2	SCRABBLE (planning, organization)
3	PICTIONARY (flexibility, time management)
4	DISTRACTION (working memory, attention)
5	5 SECOND RULE (time management, task initiation)
6	FREEZE (self-control, attention)
7	JENGA (self-control, flexibility, planning)
8	BRAINTEASERS (perseverance, flexibility)
9	CHESS (planning, flexibility, working memory)
10	SODUKU (perseverance, working memory)

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hi

What did you learn from today?

Who wants to volunteer to share?

Contact Information

Thank You!!

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Resources

- Bellini, S. (2017) *Building Social Relationships*—2nd Edition.
- Carlson, Stephanie. (2016). *Why Goldilocks Parenting Builds Executive Functioning Skills*.
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- Graziano, P.A., Reavis, R.D., Keane, S.P., & Calkins, S.D. (2007). *The role of emotion regulation and children's early academic success*. *Journal of School Psychology*, 45(1), 3- 19.
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- PsychCentral Resource Page. <https://www.psychcentral.com/blog/childhood-behavioral/2020/01/emotional-dysregulation-in-children-and-teens#6>
- The Functional Parent. <https://hes-extraordinary.com/self-regulation-strategies>
- The Left Brain Buddha. <https://leftbrainbuddha.com/10-fun-activities-that-teach-executive-functioning-kids-teens/#:~:text=%20For%20Toddlers%20and%20Preschoolers%20%20%20%20Sorting,working%20memory%20to%20search%20for%20pieces...%20More%20>
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