

Executive Functioning Skill Development by Age

	 PLANNING	 TIME MANAGEMENT	 TASK INITIATION	 ORGANIZATION	 PROBLEM SOLVING	 FLEXIBILITY	 WORKING MEMORY	 EMOTIONAL CONTROL	 IMPULSE CONTROL	 ATTENTIONAL CONTROL	 SELF MONITORING
INFANT (0-24 MONTHS)	- focusing for objects - pointing & grabbing			- shows interest in color, size, shapes - beginning matching skills	- engages in cause and effect play - figuring out 'how things work' through simple body movements and basic play skills	Older children in this age range play simple role play or imaginative play games	- plays hide-and-seek and simple recall games - participates and enjoys familiar rhymes and songs			- plays simple games like peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake - imitation and copying behaviors emerge	
TODDLER (2-4 YEARS)	understands simple instructions and can run simple errands	- beginning understanding of time concepts including seasons, days, weeks, etc. - follows visual picture schedules to order tasks. - practices waiting.	able to independently start and complete tasks that take up to 10 minutes	- understands categories and patterns - can sort toys and objects by function, form, and class - cleans up toys and belongings with adult assistance	- completes simple puzzles and games that combine language and movement to accomplish a goal. - decision making and turn-taking during play promote basic problem solving	- Beginning skills to shift between activities. - Sometimes able to manage transitions and unexpected changes without upset.	follows along to songs and fingerplays with many steps and movements.	- labels own emotions and the emotions of others - may often have tantrums or upset when frustrated, tired, or overwhelmed requiring adult comfort to soothe.	- plays active inhibition games like musical chairs, and freeze dance - learns to inhibit safety-related behaviors like touching a hot stove and street safety.	- able to direct attention to objects and activities for longer periods of time. - Responds to adult cues and redirections back to 'pay attention' when needed.	- talks about own feelings and connects simple behaviors with emotions. - plays along with other children, directing play and accepting play ideas.
EARLY LEARNER 5-12 YEARS	- able to follow a planned out set of steps to meet an end goal. - plays fast moving games and games requiring strategy and planning ahead.	- developing time estimation and a sense of how long tasks will take. - beginning skills to manage leisure time and required tasks.	able to independently start and complete tasks that take up to 30-60 minutes	- organize and sequence stories - can follow simple checklists - gathers materials for familiar routines, often with adult assistance and reminders	- identifies and defines problems to many simple social and academic tasks; - emerging skills to brainstorm and break apart problems to identify solutions.	Participates in organized social activities like sports, clubs, and activities where unpredictable events occur. Often uses adult support to dynamically adjust.	- Independent with puzzles, logic games, and coordinated group activities. - able to collect information and apply it to new settings.	learns to control tantrums and frustrations without adult comfort.	- follows safety rules and most social norms for behavior. - behavior maintains when teachers or adults are not around	- able to save money for desired objects. - developing note taking, reminders, and planning tools to help sustain attentional control.	- able to complete activities like journaling to reflect on own behavior. - checks own work for simple mistakes.
TEEN 13-18	- able to independently plan out the steps of homework or important project to meet an end goal. - Works in a group of peers to plan social activities and events.	- estimates how long it takes to complete tasks and adjusts working speed to fit. - understands and works to avoid the consequences of ineffective time management.	able to independently start tasks that take up to 60-90 minutes to complete	- follows complex school schedules combined with home routines. - able to use systems for organizing schoolwork and activities.	- independently identifies problems at home, work, and with friends. - able to sort out many conflicts and make decisions about complex problems independently, make seek adult guidance.	Able to manage many unpredictable changes to schedules and routines, but may sometimes need adult support to identify strategies to dynamically adjust.	- able to collect information and apply it to new settings. - independent with puzzles, logic games, and coordinated group activities	- greater understanding of others emotions, including empathy and a desire for social change. - may experience 'adult feelings' but not have experience yet in how to manage them.	- greater risk-taking behaviors - may begin to test some adult safety behaviors and social norms - may engage in self-talk to help manage impulses	- able to save money for desired objects as well as creates and executes plans to earn money for desired items. - Beginning mindfulness of distractions, but may need adult support to avoid them.	- able to monitor performance and adjust/improve. - Uses tools to monitor behavior. - May recruit adult feedback or need reminders from coaches, parents, friends, teachers, etc.
YOUNG ADULT 18+	- able to develop and maintain multiple different plans at one time to meet many different goals - able to establish and meet long-term goals.	- seeks out and implements tools and systems to manage time more efficiently - uses routines and modifies schedules dynamically to meet changing demands.	- initiates and completes tasks despite adverse conditions and distractions. - prioritizing and planning occurs ahead of beginning most activities	- maintains neat and orderly systems for daily living tasks. - when areas of life like email household chores get out of hand, can re-organize as needed.	- generates solutions to complex problems. - persists in developing new and creative strategies to ongoing problems.	- modifies schedules dynamically to meet changing demands. - Unpredictability causes occasional stress, but able to handle most changes easily.	- greatest working memory capacity in early adulthood. - able to collect, store, and synthesize information from multiple sources to accomplish tasks and goals.	emotional modulation in most settings including controlling outbursts and managing frustration in healthy ways.	- manages impulsive behaviors across a variety of settings. - Withholds rushing through things - inhibits reckless and dangerous behaviors.	- Able to sustain attention in the face of many distractions - Eliminates or reduces distractions when needed	- checks work for mistakes. - monitors and compares own behavior to others performance.