












## Executive Functioning Skill Development by Age

	 <b>PLANNING</b>	 <b>TIME MANAGEMENT</b>	 <b>TASK INITIATION</b>	 <b>ORGANIZATION</b>	 <b>PROBLEM SOLVING</b>	 <b>FLEXIBILITY</b>	 <b>WORKING MEMORY</b>	 <b>EMOTIONAL CONTROL</b>	 <b>IMPULSE CONTROL</b>	 <b>ATTENTIONAL CONTROL</b>	 <b>SELF MONITORING</b>
<b>INFANT (0-24 MONTHS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focusing for objects</li> <li>• pointing &amp; grabbing</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• shows interest in color, size, shapes</li> <li>• beginning matching skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• engages in cause and effect play</li> <li>• figuring out 'how things work' through simple body movements and basic play skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older children in this age range play simple role play or imaginative play games</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• plays hide-and-seek and simple recall games</li> <li>• participates and enjoys familiar rhymes and songs</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• plays simple games like peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake</li> <li>• imitation and copying behaviors emerge</li> </ul>	
<b>TODDLER (2-4 YEARS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understands simple instructions and can run simple errands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• beginning understanding of time concepts including seasons, days, weeks, etc.</li> <li>• follows visual picture schedules to order tasks.</li> <li>• practices waiting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• able to independently start and complete tasks that take up to 10 minutes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understands categories and patterns</li> <li>• can sort toys and objects by function, form, and class</li> <li>• cleans up toys and belongings with adult assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• completes simple puzzles and games that combine language and movement to accomplish a goal.</li> <li>• decision making and turn-taking during play promote basic problem solving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beginning skills to shift between activities.</li> <li>• Sometimes able to manage transitions and unexpected changes without upset.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• follows along to songs and fingerplays with many steps and movements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• labels own emotions and the emotions of others</li> <li>• may often have tantrums or upset when frustrated, tired, or overwhelmed requiring adult comfort to soothe.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• plays active inhibition games like musical chairs, and freeze dance</li> <li>• learns to inhibit safety-related behaviors like touching a hot stove and street safety.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• able to direct attention to objects and activities for longer periods of time.</li> <li>• Responds to adult cues and redirections back to 'pay attention' when needed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• talks about own feelings and connects simple behaviors with emotions.</li> <li>• plays along with other children, directing play and accepting play ideas.</li> </ul>
<b>EARLY LEARNER 5-12 YEARS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• able to follow a planned out set of steps to meet an end goal.</li> <li>• plays fast moving games and games requiring strategy and planning ahead.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developing time estimation and a sense of how long tasks will take.</li> <li>• beginning skills to manage leisure time and required tasks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• able to independently start and complete tasks that take up to 30-60 minutes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• organize and sequence stories</li> <li>• can follow simple checklists</li> <li>• gathers materials for familiar routines, often with adult assistance and reminders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identifies and defines problems to many simple social and academic tasks;</li> <li>• emerging skills to brainstorm and break apart problems to identify solutions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participates in organized social activities like sports, clubs, and activities where unpredictable events occur. Often uses adult support to dynamically adjust.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent with puzzles, logic games, and coordinated group activities.</li> <li>• able to collect information and apply it to new settings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• learns to control tantrums and frustrations without adult comfort.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• follows safety rules and most social norms for behavior.</li> <li>• behavior maintains when teachers or adults are not around</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• able to save money for desired objects.</li> <li>• developing note taking, reminders, and planning tools to help sustain attentional control.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• able to complete activities like journaling to reflect on own behavior.</li> <li>• checks own work for simple mistakes.</li> </ul>
<b>TEEN 13-18</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• able to independently plan out the steps of homework or important project to meet an end goal.</li> <li>• Works in a group of peers to plan social activities and events.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• estimates how long it takes to complete tasks and adjusts working speed to fit.</li> <li>• understands and works to avoid the consequences of ineffective time management.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• able to independently start tasks that take up to 60-90 minutes to complete</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• follows complex school schedules combined with home routines.</li> <li>• able to use systems for organizing schoolwork and activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• independently identifies problems at home, work, and with friends.</li> <li>• able to sort out many conflicts and make decisions about complex problems independently, make seek adult guidance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to manage many unpredictable changes to schedules and routines, but may sometimes need adult support to identify strategies to dynamically adjust.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• able to collect information and apply it to new settings.</li> <li>• independent with puzzles, logic games, and coordinated group activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• greater understanding of others emotions, including empathy and a desire for social change.</li> <li>• may experience 'adult feelings' but not have experience yet in how to manage them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• greater risk-taking behaviors</li> <li>• may begin to test some adult safety behaviors and social norms</li> <li>• may engage in self-talk to help manage impulses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• able to save money for desired objects as well as creates and executes plans to earn money for desired items.</li> <li>• Beginning mindfulness of distractions, but may need adult support to avoid them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• able to monitor performance and adjust/improve.</li> <li>• Uses tools to monitor behavior.</li> <li>• May recruit adult feedback or need reminders from coaches, parents, friends, teachers, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>YOUNG ADULT 18+</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• able to develop and maintain multiple different plans at one time to meet many different goals</li> <li>• able to establish and meet long-term goals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• seeks out and implements tools and systems to manage time more efficiently</li> <li>• uses routines and modifies schedules dynamically to meet changing demands.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• initiates and completes tasks despite adverse conditions and distractions.</li> <li>• prioritizing and planning occurs ahead of beginning most activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maintains neat and orderly systems for daily living tasks.</li> <li>• when areas of life like email household chores get out of hand, can re-organize as needed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• generates solutions to complex problems.</li> <li>• persists in developing new and creative strategies to ongoing problems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• modifies schedules dynamically to meet changing demands.</li> <li>• Unpredictability causes occasional stress, but able to handle most changes easily.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• greatest working memory capacity in early adulthood.</li> <li>• able to collect, store, and synthesize information from multiple sources to accomplish tasks and goals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• emotional modulation in most settings including controlling outbursts and managing frustration in healthy ways.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• manages impulsive behaviors across a variety of settings.</li> <li>• Withholds rushing through things</li> <li>• inhibits reckless and dangerous behaviors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to sustain attention in the face of many distractions</li> <li>• Eliminates or reduces distractions when needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• checks work for mistakes.</li> <li>• monitors and compares own behavior to others performance.</li> </ul>

## References

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