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EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

Executive functions are a collection of processes that are responsible for guiding, directing, and managing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral functions, particularly during active, novel problem solving. (Gioia, Isquith, Guy, & Kenworthy, 2000)

Inhibition: The ability to inhibit, resist, or not act on an impulse and the ability to stop one's own behavior at the appropriate time.

Shifting: The ability to move freely from one situation, activity, or aspect of a problem to another as the circumstances demand. For example, to make transitions, problem-solve flexibly, switch or alternate attention, and change focus from one mind set or topic to another.

Emotional Control: The ability to modulate emotional responses.

Initiate: The ability to begin a task or activity, as well as to independently generate ideas, responses, or problem-solving strategies.

Working Memory: The capacity to hold information in mind for the purpose of completing a task (essential in carrying out multi-step activities, completing mental arithmetic, or following complex instructions).

Plan/Organize The ability to manage current and future-oriented task demands.

Plan: The ability to anticipate future events, set goals, and develop appropriate steps ahead of time to carry out a task or activity.

Organize: The ability to bring order to information and appreciate main ideas or key concepts when learning or communicating information.

Organization of Materials: Orderliness of work, play, and storage spaces (e.g., desks, lockers, backpacks, and bedrooms). Essentially, the way in which children order or organize their world and belongings.

Monitor: Work-checking habits (whether a child assesses his or her own performance during or shortly after finishing a task to ensure appropriate attainment of a goal) and personal monitoring (keeping track of the effect his or her behavior has on others).

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