

8 Key Executive Functions

Executive functions are skills everyone uses to organize and act on information. If your child has executive functioning issues, he may struggle with some or all of the following skills.

Skill	What it means	How it looks
Impulse Control	Impulse control helps your child think before acting.	Kids with weak impulse control might blurt out inappropriate things. They're also more likely to engage in risky behavior.
Emotional Control	Emotional control helps your child keep his feelings in check.	Kids with weak emotional control often overreact. They can have trouble dealing with criticism and regrouping when something goes wrong.
Flexible Thinking	Flexible thinking allows your child to adjust to the unexpected.	Kids with "rigid" thinking don't roll with the punches. They might get frustrated if asked to think about something from a different angle.
Working Memory	Working memory helps your child keep key information in mind.	Kids with weak working memory have trouble remembering directions--even if they've taken notes or you've repeated them several times.
Self-Monitoring	Self-monitoring allows your child to evaluate how he's doing.	Kids with weak self-monitoring skills may be surprised by a bad grade or negative feedback.
Planning and Prioritizing	Planning and prioritizing help your child on a goal and e plan to meet it.	Kids with weak planning and prioritizing skills may not know which parts of a project are most important.
Task Initiation	Task initiation helps your child take action and get started.	Kids who have weak task initiation skills may freeze up because they have no idea where to begin.
Organization	Organization lets your child keep track of things physically and mentally.	Kids with weak organization skills can lose their train of thought--as well as their cell phone and homework.