## EX Factor: Executive Functions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exec. Functions</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Strategies/Interventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task Initiation</strong></td>
<td><em>The ability to begin projects without undue procrastination, in an efficient or timely fashion.</em>&lt;br&gt;• Can’t get started on a task on his/her own&lt;br&gt;• Puts off long term assignments&lt;br&gt;• Has meandering thoughts and uses associative thinking</td>
<td>✤ Clear, concrete expectations&lt;br&gt;✤ Interactive checklists&lt;br&gt;✤ Timers&lt;br&gt;✤ Private work space&lt;br&gt;✤ Reflection &amp; reinforcement!</td>
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<td><strong>Flexibility</strong></td>
<td><em>The ability to revise plans in the face of obstacles, setbacks, new information, or mistakes; it relates to adaptability to changing conditions.</em>&lt;br&gt;• Gets stuck on one problem solving strategy&lt;br&gt;• Gets upset by unexpected changes to schedule or plans&lt;br&gt;• Doesn’t look for new resources to help solve a problem</td>
<td>✤ Visuals&lt;br&gt;✤ Frameworks &amp; scaffolds&lt;br&gt;✤ Discussing “thinking flexibly”&lt;br&gt;✤ Social Thinking&lt;br&gt;✤ Reflection &amp; reinforcement!</td>
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<td><strong>Sustained Attention</strong></td>
<td><em>The capacity to maintain attention to a situation or task in spite of distractibility, fatigue, or boredom.</em>&lt;br&gt;• Fails to complete class work on time&lt;br&gt;• Stops work before finishing it&lt;br&gt;• Can’t refocus after interruptions&lt;br&gt;• Has difficulty staying focused on a task</td>
<td>✤ Timers&lt;br&gt;✤ Incentives&lt;br&gt;✤ Limit visual distractors&lt;br&gt;✤ Incorporate interests&lt;br&gt;✤ Reflection &amp; reinforcement!</td>
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<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td><em>The ability to arrange or place things according to a system.</em>&lt;br&gt;• Doesn’t write down assignments&lt;br&gt;• Loses books and/or papers&lt;br&gt;• Doesn’t keep belongings neat and in appropriate location&lt;br&gt;• Can’t keep backpack organized</td>
<td>✤ Binder&lt;br&gt;✤ Guided notes&lt;br&gt;✤ Checklists&lt;br&gt;✤ Graphic organizers&lt;br&gt;✤ Color coding&lt;br&gt;✤ Reflection &amp; reinforcement!</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Planning &amp; Prioritization</strong></td>
<td>• Doesn’t know where to start an assignment</td>
<td>✤ Task analysis&lt;br&gt;✤ Plan discussion</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### EX Factor: Executive Functions

| The ability to create a roadmap to reach a goal or to complete a task. | • Can’t develop a timeline for long-term projects  
• Has difficulty breaking an assignment into smaller parts  
• Tries to do a little bit of everything at once | ✤ Calendars  
✤ Time estimations  
✤ Reflection & reinforcement! |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Time Management  
The capacity to estimate how much time one has, how to allocate it, and how to stay within time limits and deadlines. | • Doesn’t work efficiently  
• Can’t estimate how long it takes to do something  
• Doesn’t complete work on time  
• Has difficulty following a timeline to complete work | ✤ Timers & visuals  
✤ Clear expectations  
✤ Schedules & checklists  
✤ Day planners  
✤ Reflection & reinforcement! |
| Working Memory  
The ability to hold information in memory while performing complex tasks. | • Forgets or can’t follow directions  
• Leaves homework at home  
• Doesn’t remember to hand in work  
• Has difficulty remembering instructional sequences after instruction  
• Doesn’t bring home appropriate materials  
• Loses things in the classroom and other places  
• Doesn’t follow classroom procedures | ✤ Task lists  
✤ Verbal & nonverbal reminders  
✤ Timers & visuals  
✤ Reflection & reinforcement! |
| Metacognition  
The ability to stand back and take a bird’s-eye view of oneself in a situation; the ability to self-monitor and self-evaluate. | • Doesn’t have effective study strategies  
• Has difficulty catching or correcting mistakes  
• Makes careless errors  
• Fails to check work  
• Doesn’t ask for help when needed  
• Doesn’t attempt to solve problem first on his/her own before asking for help  
• Can’t accurately evaluate own work | ✤ Comic Strip Conversations  
✤ Self-monitoring  
✤ Goal-setting  
✤ Reviewing video  
✤ Reflection & reinforcement! |
## EX Factor: Executive Functions

| Response Inhibition  
*The capacity to think before acting.* | Topics: &nbsp;&nbsp;• Talks out in class  
• Interrupts others  
• Says things without thinking  
• Acts impulsively (verbal and/or physical)  
• Has difficulty waiting his/her turn  
• Doesn’t recognize the reactions of others | Tips: &nbsp;&nbsp;✦ Priming  
✦ Schedules & timers  
✦ Visual reminders  
✦ Coping tools  
✦ Reflection & reinforcement! |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Emotional Control  
*The ability to manage emotions in order to achieve goals, complete tasks, or control or direct behavior.* | Topics: &nbsp;&nbsp;• Freezes on tests  
• Gets frustrated when makes mistakes  
• Stops trying in face of challenge  
• Throws temper tantrums  
• Isn’t aware of own feelings | Tips: &nbsp;&nbsp;✦ Coping & relaxation tools  
✦ Visual reminders  
✦ Sensory tools  
✦ Reflection & reinforcement! |
| Goal-Directed Persistence  
*The capacities to have a goal, follow through to the completion of the goal, and not be put off by or distracted by competing interests.* | Topics: &nbsp;&nbsp;• Doesn’t see connection between homework and long term assignments  
• Doesn’t follow through to achieve stated goals  
• Resents having too much homework | Tips: &nbsp;&nbsp;✦ Schedules & looking ahead  
✦ Clear goals  
✦ Self-monitoring progress  
✦ Reflection & reinforcement! |
| Stress Tolerance  
*The ability to thrive in stressful situations and to cope with uncertainty, change and performance demands.* | Topics: &nbsp;&nbsp;• Angry when asked to correct something  
• Shuts down  
• Sensitive to criticism | Tips: &nbsp;&nbsp;✦ See strategies under Emotional Control  
✦ Acknowledge the frustration  
✦ Allow manageable alternatives and decision-making |

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*Executive Skills in Children and Adolescents*  Dawson and Guare, Guilford Press, NY, 2004  
*No Mind Left Behind*  Cox, Penguin Group, NY, 2007