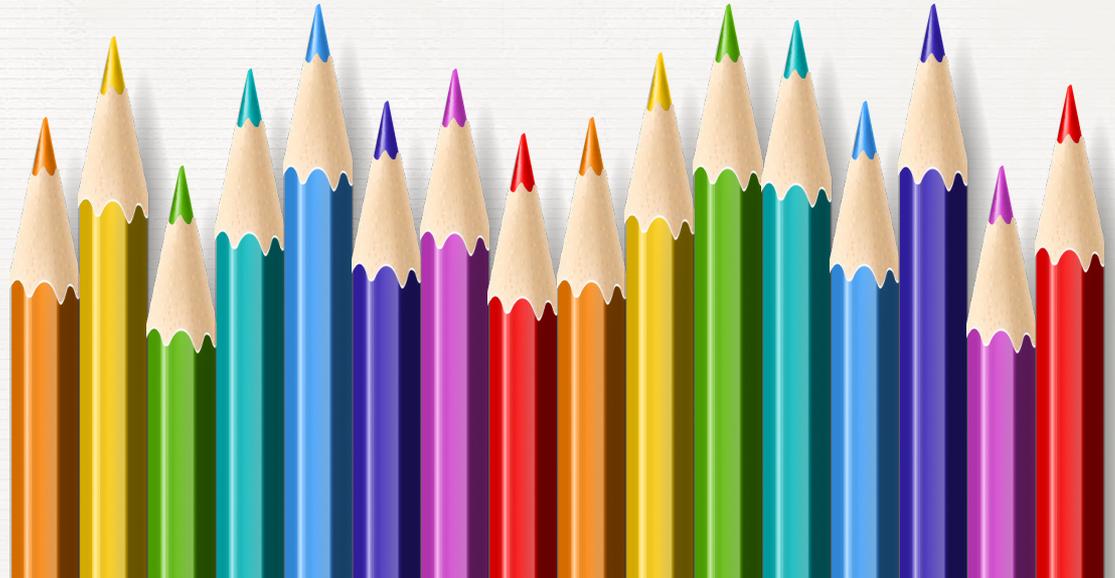


EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS FOR THE ELEMENTARY-AGED CHILD





Hello, Hillside SEPAC!

We are:

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Learning Targets

Objectives:

(WALT) We Are Learning To identify the components of Executive Functioning and how those skills can impact an elementary-aged student.

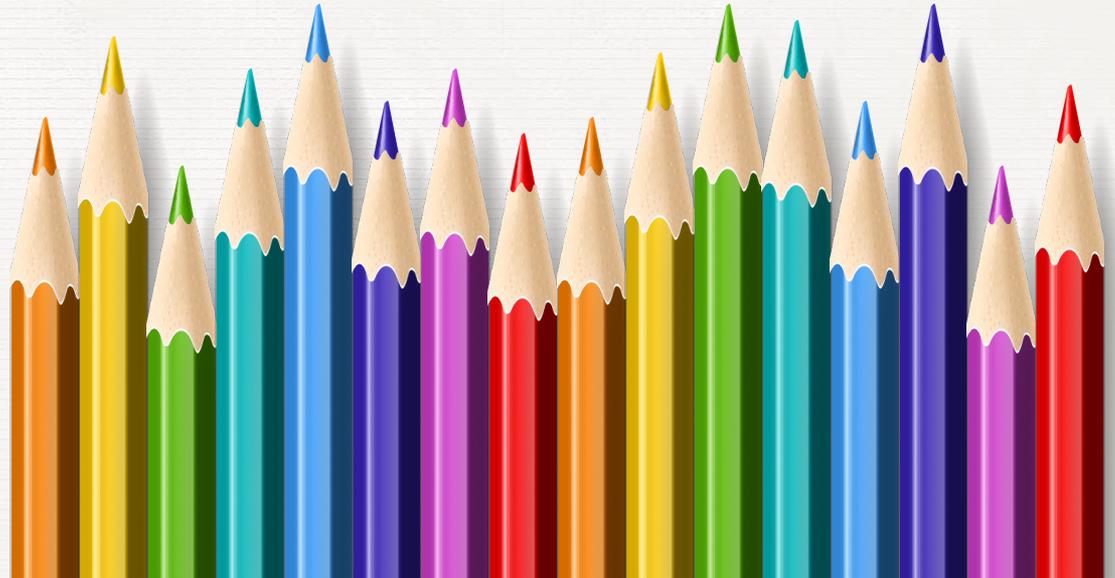
Criteria for Success:

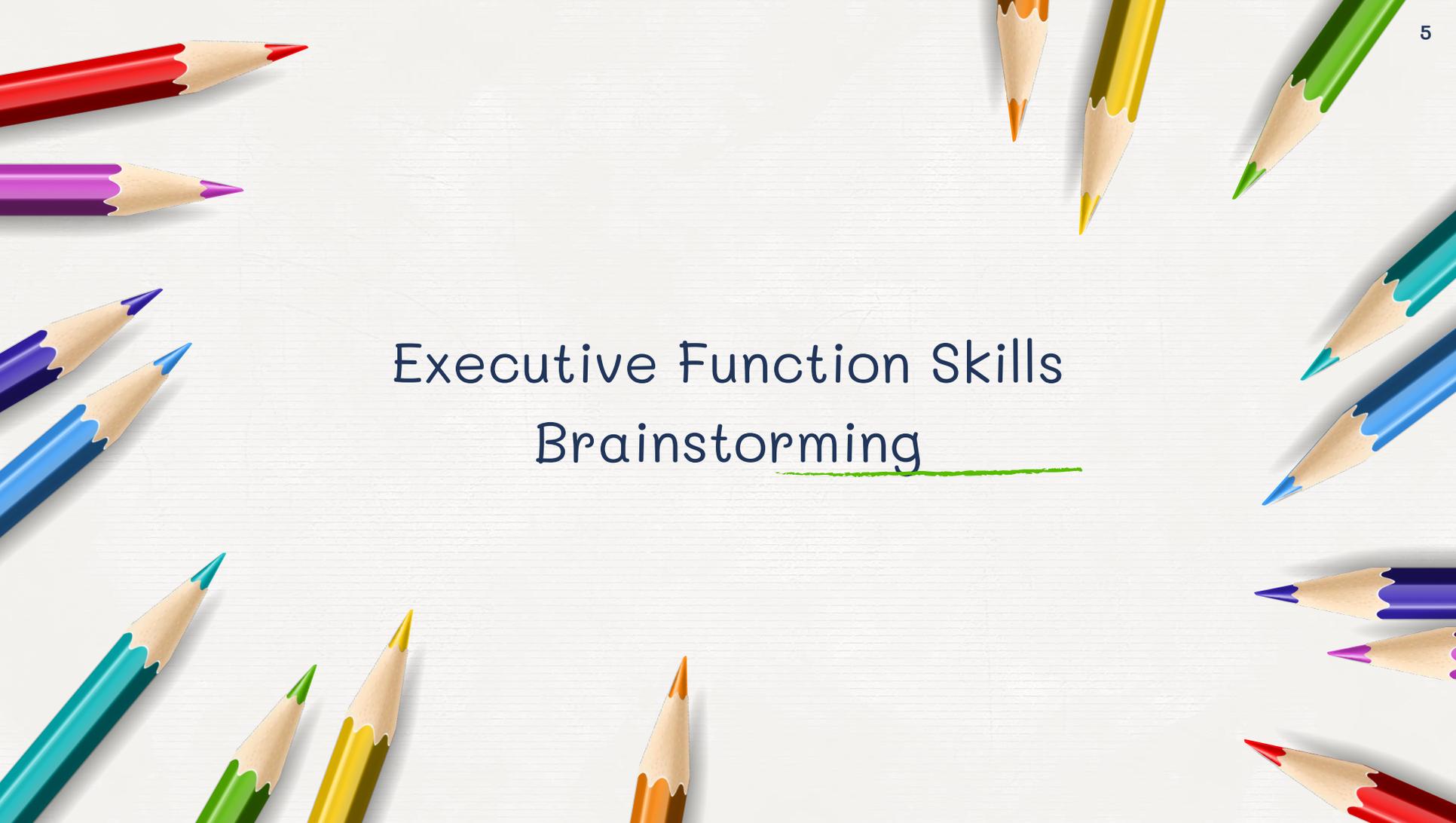
I will be able to name at least four areas of Executive Function and describe related strategies to improve these skills.



1. What is Executive Functioning?

Let's start with an activity



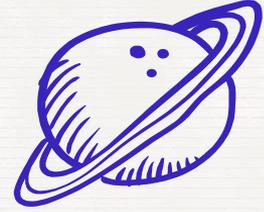
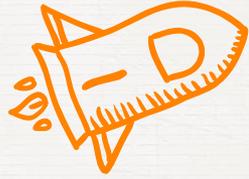


Executive Function Skills Brainstorming

Quick Jot

- x On your post-it, please write down your best definition of executive functioning (EF) skills.
- x Try to name at least 4 different EF categories.





So what is Executive Functioning?



DEFINITION OF EF SKILLS -

“EF is a term used to describe a set of mental processes that helps us connect past experience with present action.” **

“This set of multiple cognitive processes act in a coordinated way to direct cognition, emotion, and motor functions.” **

**from Prince George’s County Public Schools and Steven Feifer (school neuropsychologist)



CATEGORIES OF EF SKILLS -

Fall into 3 main areas



CATEGORIES OF EF SKILLS

- ❑ Inhibition
- ❑ Shift
- ❑ Initiation
- ❑ Working Memory
- ❑ Plan/Organize
- ❑ Organize Materials
- ❑ Monitor
- ❑ Self-Monitoring
- ❑ Self-Regulation



Inhibition (Behavioral)

- ✗ The ability to stop one's own behavior at the appropriate time including stopping actions and thoughts.



Inhibition - Marshmallow Test



Inhibition - General Examples

Home/Classroom Behavior

- ✗ Difficulty waiting
- ✗ Interrupts and disrupts group activities and blurting out
- ✗ Misinterprets directions and makes careless mistakes

General Strategies

- ✗ “Catch” student being good
- ✗ Have student repeat directions
- ✗ Ask questions to make student stop and think



Shift (Behavioral)

- ✗ To move freely from one situation to another and to think flexibly in order to respond appropriately to the situation.



Shift - General Examples

Home/Classroom Behavior

- ✗ Difficulty making transitions
- ✗ Difficulty starting a new task before the first task is complete
- ✗ Difficulty switching gears (+/- problems on same page)

General Strategies

- ✗ Give sufficient warning for upcoming transitions
- ✗ Make the day as predictable as possible
- ✗ Guide students to highlight math signs before solving





READ THE WORD

RED

BLUE

GREEN

BLUE

GREEN

RED

GREEN

BLUE

BLUE

BLUE

RED

GREEN

RED

GREEN

RED



NAME THE COLOR (don't read)

RED

BLUE

GREEN

BLUE

GREEN

RED

GREEN

BLUE

BLUE

BLUE

RED

GREEN

RED

GREEN

RED

BLUE

BLUE

GREEN

Initiation (Cognitive)

- ✗ Begin task independently without reminders, independently generate ideas or responses, and develop problem solving strategies.



Initiation - General Examples

Home/Classroom Behavior

- ✗ Difficulty starting an assignment/chore independently
- ✗ Difficulty making decisions
- ✗ May get “stuck”

General Strategies

- ✗ Use graphic organizers
- ✗ Provide a “to-do” list
- ✗ Use brainstorming techniques



Working Memory (Cognitive)

- ✗ Holding information in mind while performing complex tasks.
- ✗ Listen to the following sequence of numbers and be prepared to repeat the information when prompted.



Working Memory - General Examples

Home/Classroom Behavior

- ✗ Student gets confused when too much information is presented
- ✗ May frequently switch tasks or fail to complete tasks
- ✗ Student may lose track of what they are doing as they work

General Strategies

- ✗ Chunk information and use of mnemonics
- ✗ Use visuals/graphic organizers/checklists
- ✗ Color-code information and/or materials



Plan/Organize (Cognitive)

- ✗ Plan ahead and develop strategies, including following directions



Plan/Organize (Cognitive)- General Examples

Home/Classroom Behavior

- ✗ Difficulty completing assignments in a timely manner (may underestimate the time needed to complete assignments)
- ✗ Student approaches tasks in a haphazard manner
- ✗ Student has difficulty generating ideas, responses or starting an assignment independently

General Strategies

- ✗ Use a timer to impose time limits for completing a task
- ✗ Have student verbalize a plan of approach in advance
- ✗ Break up assignments into sequential steps



Organize Materials (Cognitive)

- ✗ The ability to impose order on work, play and storage spaces as well as the ability to manage current and future oriented task demands. This includes organization of a student's backpack, folders, desk, and bedroom.



Organize Materials (Cognitive)- General Examples

Home/Classroom Behavior

- ✗ Desk is often disorganized and messy
- ✗ Student often loses assignments and can't find their location in folders/binders
- ✗ Room is often disorganized and things are hard to find

General Strategies

- ✗ Desk organizer/separator
- ✗ Color coding materials and folders/discarding old materials
- ✗ Separating materials into bins, closets, drawers and using clear labeling



Monitor (Cognitive)

- ✗ Paying attention to what you're doing and error monitoring



Monitor (Cognitive)- General Examples

Home/Classroom Behavior

- ✘ Appears to lack pride in work
- ✘ Difficulty checking over work/proofreading
- ✘ May have difficulty monitoring volume of voice

General Strategies

- ✘ Breakdown work with specific goals for each section
- ✘ Provide explicit goal & scoring rubrics to define quality of work
- ✘ Role playing and provide self monitoring questions (Am I inside or outside? Which type of voice should I be using? Is everyone else speaking softly?)



Self-Monitoring (Emotional)

- ✗ The ability to monitor one's own performance and to measure it against some standard of what is needed or expected.



Self-Monitoring (Emotional)- General Examples

Home/Classroom Behavior

- ✘ Child may have a behavioral overreaction that doesn't match the circumstances
- ✘ Goes from 0-60 in 2 seconds
- ✘ Can't explain why they feel a certain way

General Strategies

- ✘ Role play
- ✘ Deep breathing/think before you react/wait 10 seconds before saying/doing anything
- ✘ Label emotions



Self-Regulation (Emotional)

- ✘ Taking an emotional inventory to determine understimulation/overstimulation and taking the steps needed get to an optimal level of performance



Self-Regulation (Emotional)- General Examples

Home/Classroom Behavior

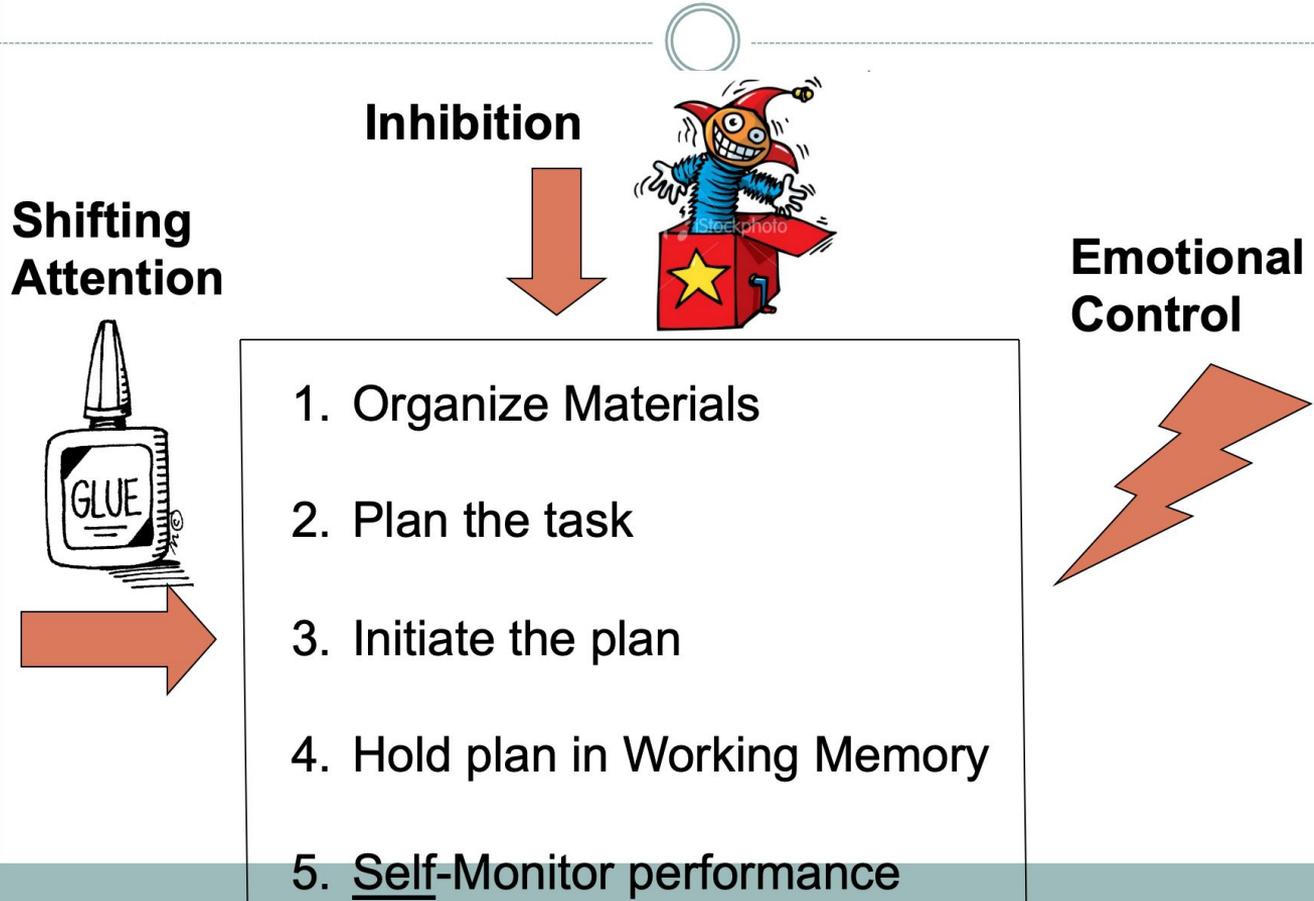
- ✗ Reactivity to stimuli
- ✗ Overreaction or underreaction
- ✗ Irritation, frustration, anger

General Strategies

- ✗ Positive Corrective Feedback
- ✗ Teach and use calming skills/mindfulness or alerting strategies
- ✗ Recognizing cues to emotions (triggers)



A model of Executive Functioning



School Initiatives Supporting EF Skills

- ✗ Caring Communities
- ✗ SEL
- ✗ Mindfulness
- ✗ Pillars of Character
- ✗ Mindset



Exit Ticket

- x Now that you have had a chance to learn more about EF, can you add to or modify your original definition of executive functioning (EF) skills.
- x Can you identify strategies to support a child with EF weaknesses?
- x What is something surprising or interesting that you learned today?



THANK YOU!!

- x Any questions or comments?

