



Institute on Executive Functioning™

What Is Executive Functioning?

Executive functioning is a group of processes involving metacognition that allows individuals to self-regulate the ways in which they interact with their environment. Executive function (EF) skills develop and improve throughout childhood and into young adulthood (Strosnider & Sharpe, 2019, p. 6). These skills, which are essential to successfully completing everyday tasks, are often grouped into categories. Strosnider and Sharpe (2019, p. 6) developed a model grouping the categories as follow:

- Working memory;
- Prioritizing, organizing, sequencing, managing time and planning;
- Attending, initiating and focusing;
- Social/emotional and inhibiting;
- Communicating, Cognitive flexibility/Shifting.

Children are not born with executive function skills. These skills develop over time and can be taught using explicit instruction. Determination of skills needing attention are identified and strategies using metacognition that can help students learn to self-regulate are taught. Technology, such as the Can Due homework app, can be helpful in the teaching of executive function skills in terms of organizing, prioritizing, planning, managing time and sequencing. The earlier executive function skill deficits are addressed the better, but these skills can still be improved in middle school and beyond.

Reference:

Strosnider, R & Sharpe, V. (2019). *The Executive function guidebook: Strategies to help all students achieve success*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Content provided by Strosnider & Sharpe, www.instituteonexecutivefunctioning.com, authors of the EF Guidebook, Corwin, 2019.