Executive Skills Questionnaire for Youth

Adapted from Peg Dawson & Richard Guare

**WHAT ARE EXECUTIVE SKILLS?**

**Executive skills** are skills we use every day to manage our life and achieve our goals. They help us accomplish big goals, like finishing school or a training program, getting a job, and saving up for a down payment on a car. They also help us achieve smaller goals, like completing an assignment at school, studying for a test, getting ready for a job interview, finishing an important project at work, and doing errands and chores, like cleaning up a room or taking care of a younger sibling.

**WHAT IS THIS?**

This questionnaire is to better understand your **executive skills**—which are your strengths and which are your weaknesses. We do better with achieving our goals if we can identify ways to rely on our strengths and improve our weaknesses–or do our best to not let our weaknesses get in the way.

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**INSTRUCTIONS**

To complete this questionnaire

1. Read each item and decide if it is a big, moderate, mild, slight or no problem for you. Circle the number that corresponds to your answer. Be as honest as possible—the more honest you are, the more accurate the results will be.

Here’s an example:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | 1  Big Problem | 2  Moderate Problem | 3  Mild Problem | 4  Slight Problem | 5  No Problem |
| # | I have trouble getting here on time every morning. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

1. After you’ve answered all 33 items, write the scores for each item using the score sheet at the end.
2. Add the scores for each section. Each section is made up of three separate questions.
3. Write the skills with the three highest scores in the box labeled: Your Executive Skills Strengths.
4. Write the skills with the three lowest scores in the box labeled: Your Executive Skills Weaknesses.

**WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?**

We all have different strengths and weaknesses. Knowing our strengths and weaknesses allows us to think about how can we use our strengths to overcome our weaknesses or what can we do to strengthen our weak skills so they don't keep us from achieving our goals.

The last page of this packet contains definitions of each of the executive function skills being surveyed.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Item | **SECTION A** | 1  Big Problem | 2  Moderate Problem | 3  Mild Problem | 4  Slight Problem | 5  No Problem |
|  | I act on impulse | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | I get in trouble for talking too much in class | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | I say things without thinking | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Item | **SECTION B** | 1  Big Problem | 2  Moderate Problem | 3  Mild Problem | 4  Slight Problem | 5  No Problem |
|  | I say, “I’ll do it later” and then forget about it | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | I forget homework assignments or forget to bring home needed materials | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | I lose or misplace belongings such as coats, notebooks, sports equipment, etc. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Item | **SECTION C** | 1  Big Problem | 2  Moderate Problem | 3  Mild Problem | 4  Slight Problem | 5  No Problem |
|  | I get annoyed when homework is too hard or confusing or takes too long to finish | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | I have a short fuse, am easily frustrated | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | I get upset easily when things don’t go as planned | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Item | **SECTION D** | 1  Big Problem | 2  Moderate Problem | 3  Mild Problem | 4  Slight Problem | 5  No Problem |
|  | I have difficulty paying attention; easily distracted | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | I run out of steam before finishing my homework | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | I have problems sticking with chores until they are done | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Item | **SECTION E** | 1  Big Problem | 2  Moderate Problem | 3  Mild Problem | 4  Slight Problem | 5  No Problem |
|  | I put off homework or chores until the last minute | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | It’s hard for me to aside fun activities in order to start homework | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | I need many reminders to start chores | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Item | **SECTION F** | 1  Big Problem | 2  Moderate Problem | 3  Mild Problem | 4  Slight Problem | 5  No Problem |
|  | I have trouble planning for big assignments (knowing what to do first, second, etc.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | It’s hard for me to set priorities when I have a lot of things to do | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | I become overwhelmed by long-term projects or big assignments | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Item | **SECTION G** | 1  Big Problem | 2  Moderate Problem | 3  Mild Problem | 4  Slight Problem | 5  No Problem |
|  | My backpack and notebooks are disorganized | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | My desk or workspace at home is a mess | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | I have trouble keeping bedroom tidy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Item | **SECTION H** | 1  Big Problem | 2  Moderate Problem | 3  Mild Problem | 4  Slight Problem | 5  No Problem |
|  | I have a hard time estimating how long it takes to do something (such as homework) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | I often don’t finish homework at night and rush to get it done in school before class | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | I’m slow getting ready for things (e.g., school or appointments) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Item | **SECTION I** | 1  Big Problem | 2  Moderate Problem | 3  Mild Problem | 4  Slight Problem | 5  No Problem |
|  | If the first solution to a problem doesn’t work, I have trouble thinking of a different one | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | It’s hard for me to deal with changes in plans or routines | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | I have problems with open-ended homework assignments  (e.g., doesn’t know what to write about when given a creative writing assignment) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Item | **SECTION J** | 1  Big Problem | 2  Moderate Problem | 3  Mild Problem | 4  Slight Problem | 5  No Problem |
|  | I don’t have effective study strategies | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | I don’t check my work for mistakes even when the stakes are high | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | I don’t evaluate my performance and change tactics in order to increase success | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Item | **SECTION K** | 1  Big Problem | 2  Moderate Problem | 3  Mild Problem | 4  Slight Problem | 5  No Problem |
|  | I can’t seem to save up money for a desired object | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | I don’t see the value in earning good grades to achieve a long-term goal | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | If I should be studying but if something fun comes up, it’s hard for me to  make myself study | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Executive Skill** | **Items** | **Score on Item** | **Total Score on Section** |
| 1. Response Inhibition | 1 |  |  |
| 2 |  |
| 3 |  |
| 1. Working Memory | 4 |  |  |
| 5 |  |
| 6 |  |
| 1. Self-Regulation of Affect | 7 |  |  |
| 8 |  |
| 9 |  |
| 1. Sustained Attention | 10 |  |  |
| 11 |  |
| 12 |  |
| 1. Task Initiation | 13 |  |  |
| 14 |  |
| 15 |  |
| 1. Planning/Prioritization | 16 |  |  |
| 17 |  |
| 18 |  |
| 1. Organization | 19 |  |  |
| 20 |  |
| 21 |  |
| 1. Time Management | 22 |  |  |
| 23 |  |
| 24 |  |
| 1. Flexibility | 25 |  |  |
| 26 |  |
| 27 |  |
| 1. Metacognition | 28 |  |  |
| 29 |  |
| 30 |  |
| 1. Goal-Directed Persistence | 31 |  |  |
| 32 |  |
| 33 |  |

**Your Executive Skill Weaknesses**

**(Three lowest scores)**

**Your Executive Skill Strengths**

**(Three highest scores)**

**Executive Skills Definitions**

**Response Inhibition:** The capacity to think before you act – this ability to resist the urge to say or do something allows us the time to evaluate a situation and how our behavior might impact it.

**Working Memory:** The ability to hold information in memory while performing complex tasks. It incorporates the ability to draw on past learning or experience to apply to the situation at hand or to project into the future.

**Emotional Control:** The ability to manage emotions in order to achieve goals, complete tasks, or control and direct behavior.

**Task Initiation:** The ability to begin projects without undue procrastination, in an efficient or timely fashion.

**Sustained Attention**: The capacity to maintain attention to a situation or task in spite of distractibility, fatigue, or boredom.

**Planning/Prioritization:** The ability to create a roadmap to reach a goal or to complete a task. It also involves being able to make decisions about what’s important to focus on and what’s not important.

**Organization:** The ability to create and maintain systems to keep track of information or materials.

**Time Management:** The capacity to estimate how much time one has, how to allocate it, and how to stay within time limits and deadlines. It also involves a sense that time is important.

**Goal-Directed Persistence:** The capacity to have a goal, follow through to the completion of the goal, and not be put off by or distracted by competing interests.

**Flexibility:** The ability to revise plans in the face of obstacles, setbacks, new information or mistakes. It relates to an adaptability to changing conditions.

**Metacognition:** The ability to stand back and take a birds-eye view of oneself in a situation. It is an ability to observe how you problem solve. It also includes self-monitoring and self-evaluative skills (e.g., asking yourself, “How am I doing?” or “How did I do?” or “How did what I did affect other people?”).