

Integrating Executive Skills into IEPs and 504 Plans
for Students Who Are Smart but Scattered

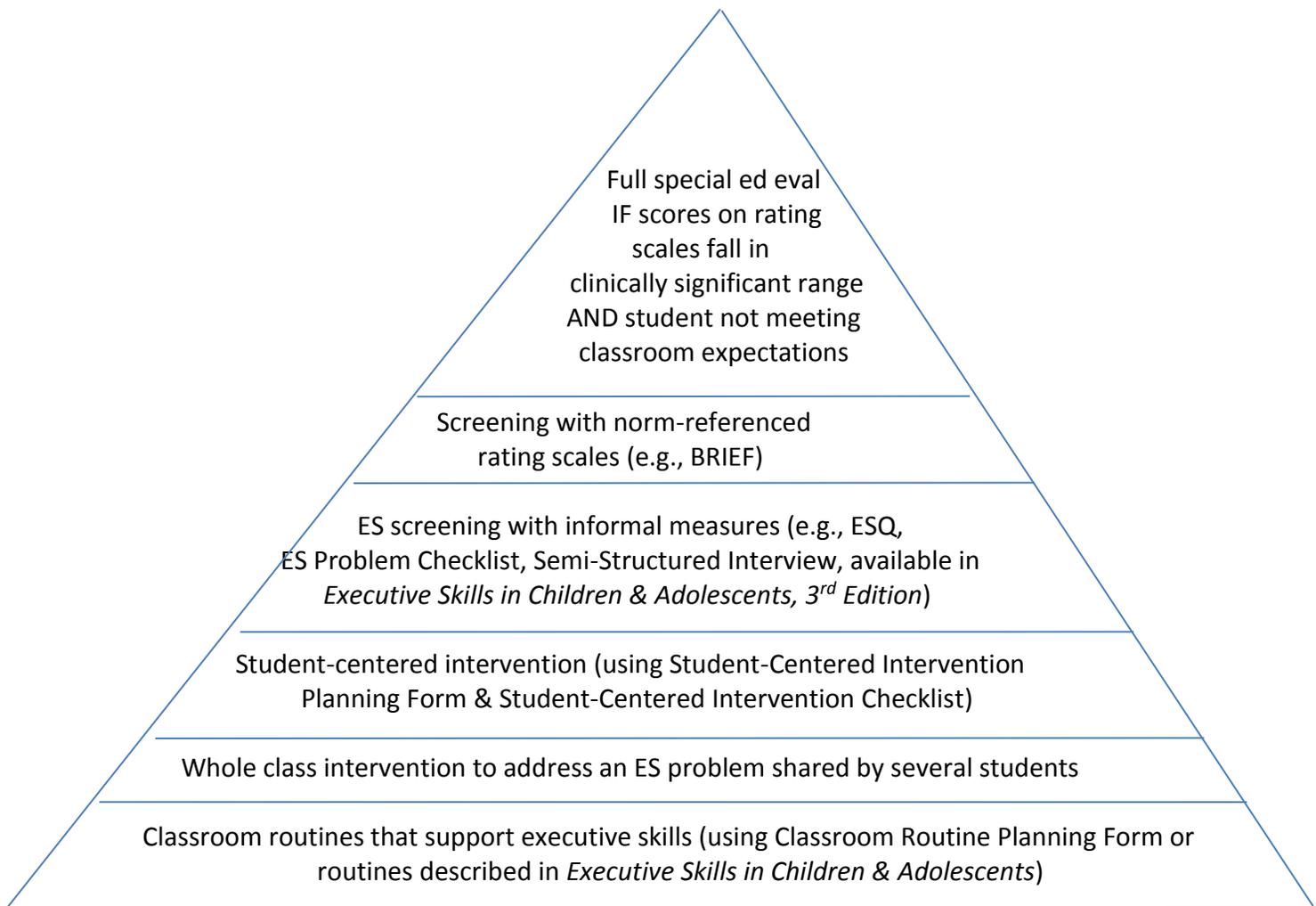
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Executive Skill Definitions

- **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. In the young child, waiting for a short period without being disruptive is an example of response inhibition while in the adolescent it would be demonstrated by accepting a referee’s call without an argument.
- **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. A young child, for example can hold in mind and follow 1-2 step directions while the middle school child can remember the expectations of multiple teachers.
- **Emotional Control:** The ability to manage emotions in order to achieve goals, complete tasks, or control and direct behavior. A young child with this skill is able to recover from a disappointment in a short time. A teenager is able to manage the anxiety of a game or test and still perform.
- **Sustained Attention:** The capacity to maintain attention to a situation or task in spite of distractibility, fatigue, or boredom. Completing a 5-minute chore with occasional supervision is an example of sustained attention in the younger child. The teenager is able to attend to homework, with short breaks, for one to two hours.
- **Task Initiation:** The ability to begin projects without undue procrastination, in an efficient or timely fashion. A young child is able to start a chore or assignment right after instructions are given. A high school student does not wait until the last minute to begin a project.
- **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. A young child, with coaching, can think of options to settle a peer conflict. A teenager can formulate a plan to get a job.
- **Organization:** The ability to create and maintain systems to keep track of information or materials. A young child can, with a reminder, put toys in a designated place. An adolescent can organize and locate sports equipment.
- **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. A young child can complete a short job within a time limit set by an adult. A high school student can establish a schedule to meet task deadlines.
- **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. A first grader can complete a job in order to get to recess. A teenager can earn and save money over time to buy something of importance.
- **Flexibility:** The ability to revise plans in the face of obstacles, setbacks, new information or mistakes. It relates to an adaptability to changing conditions. A young child can adjust to a change in plans without major distress. A high school student can accept an alternative such as a different job when the first choice is not available.
- **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?”). A young child can change behavior in response to feedback from an adult. A teenager can monitor and critique her performance and improve it by observing others who are more skilled.



Executive Skills Assessment/Intervention Hierarchy

Executive skill goals
prepared by Peg Dawson, Ed.D.

Response inhibition

The student will demonstrate response inhibition by:

- raising his/her hand and being acknowledged by the teacher before speaking in class
- in a teacher-directed activity, waiting until the person talking finishes and is acknowledged by the teacher before offering a response
- waiting his/her turn in a conversation, game or any other activity that involves turn-taking
- using acceptable language to handle conflict situations
- remaining at his seat or assigned area during seatwork time and classroom lessons
- completing assignments accurately
- making good choices to engage in assigned work tasks rather than or before engaging in preferred activities (e.g., playing video games, watching YouTube videos, playing with smart phone)

Working memory

The student will demonstrate working memory by:

- writing down all homework in assignment books or smart phones—including all necessary instructions and due dates OR
- remembering to access assignments on line and checking the site daily
- bringing all necessary materials to and from school every day (e.g., homework, notebooks/binders, permission slips, gym clothes, lunch money, coats/hats/mittens, etc.)
- handing in assignments on the dates they are due
- remembering where to find all necessary materials to get through the school day and to complete homework
- following all instructions accurately for multi-step tasks by using checklists or rubrics if necessary

Emotional control

The student will demonstrate emotional control by:

- remaining in class for the entire period and asking for help when he/she doesn't understand an assignment
- asking for a break from work when needed
- playing with other students at recess without engaging in verbal or physical aggression or unsafe behavior
- using coping strategies to recover when he/she begins to get upset (or angry, frustrated, anxious)
- being able to take tests calmly

- being able to do classroom presentations without observable anxiety
- not responding or responding calmly when classmates or other students attempt to trigger an unacceptable emotional response

Flexibility

The student will demonstrate flexibility by:

- adjusting quickly and calmly when confronted with the unexpected (e.g., changes in plans or routines, disappointment, being told no)
- handling transitions between settings and activities without observable distress or disruptive behavior
- coming up with one or more alternative plan or solution when the first strategy doesn't work
- completing open-ended tasks successfully according to the rubric assigned

Sustained attention

The student will demonstrate the ability to sustain attention by:

- accurately completing classwork and homework within the time allotted or within suggested time frames
- staying focused on class lessons (as demonstrated by asking or answering questions related to the content of the lesson or by understanding assignments associated with the lesson)

Task initiation

The student will demonstrate task initiation by:

- starting class assignments within 3 minutes of the prompt to begin working
- starting or resuming work tasks at the time agreed upon (e.g., starting homework at 5 pm daily, or "right after dinner").
- taking only short breaks and returning to work promptly with longer work tasks

Planning/prioritizing

The student will demonstrate planning and prioritization skills by:

- creating and following daily study plans
- breaking down long-term tasks into smaller subtasks and timelines
- taking notes in lecture classes that focus on key concepts and supporting details
- studying for tests by focusing on the material that is most important in order to master the skills or content
- writing essays with paragraphs that contain main ideas and supporting details or arguments arranged in a logical sequence

Organization

The student will demonstrate organization by:

- placing materials in a specified place in notebooks, backpacks, desks, and study areas
- following an organizational system with consistency (e.g., throwing out unnecessary papers, placing homework assignments in assigned spot, organizing papers for each subject separately)
- having a tidy study area to work at

Time management

The student will demonstrate time management by:

- arriving places on time
- completing assignments by the due date
- creating a work plan for longer assignments (including studying for tests) that spreads the work out over several days
- being able to estimate accurately how long a work task will take
- avoiding taking on more tasks and responsibilities (including extracurricular activities) than there is time to complete

Goal-directed persistence

The student will demonstrate goal-directed persistence by:

- being able to define a long-term goal, and develop and follow a plan to achieve that goal
- being able to resist temptations that interfere with achieving a long term goal
- being able to overcome obstacles that stand in the way of achieving a long-term goal

Metacognition

The student will demonstrate metacognition by:

- accurately assessing the student's own skills as they relate to being able to do assigned tasks or to achieve personal goals
- selecting and using the most effective strategies to accomplish a task
- identifying obstacles that prevent task or goal completion and using effective strategies to overcome those obstacles
- recognizing when an assigned task is not understood and asking for help when needed
- completing assignments that require making inferences, drawing conclusions, grasping the main idea, or "reading between the lines"
- proofreading or checking over work before handing it in

Examples of Instructional Objectives or Benchmarks

Response Inhibition

Annual Goal: Student will raise his/her hand before speaking in class			
Instructional Objective or Benchmark	Evaluation		
	Criteria	Procedures	Schedule
Student will raise hand and wait for teacher acknowledgement before speaking during circle time by November	4 times out of 5	Behavior tallies	Every 4 weeks
Student will raise hand and wait for teacher acknowledgement before speaking during circle time with teacher acknowledgement and teacher-led instruction by January	4 times out of 5	Behavior tallies	Every 4 weeks
Student will raise hand and wait for teacher acknowledgement before speaking during all classroom activities by June	4 times out of 5	Behavior tallies	Every 4 weeks

Response Inhibition

Annual Goal: Student will use acceptable language and behavior to handle conflict situations			
Instructional Objective or Benchmark	Evaluation		
	Criteria	Procedures	Schedule
Student will refrain from physical aggression and walk away from conflict situations	7 out of 10 conflict situations	Recording by para	Every 2 weeks
Student will seek assistance from an adult to handle conflict situations	4 out of 5 conflict situations	Teacher or para observation	Every 2 weeks
Student will use acceptable language to handle conflict situations	3 out of 5 conflict situations	Teacher or para observation	Every 2 weeks

Working Memory

Annual Goal: Student will bring all appropriate materials to and from school every day (e.g., homework, notebooks/binders, permission slips, gym clothes, lunch money, coats/hats/mittens, etc.)			
Instructional Objective or Benchmark	Evaluation		
	Criteria	Procedures	Schedule
Student will use checklist with reminders to make sure all appropriate materials are in backpack at beginning and end of school day by September	Every day	Teacher or para check-in	Daily
Student will use checklist independently without reminders to bring all necessary materials to and from school by January	4 out of 5 school days	Teacher or para check-in	Daily
Student will bring all necessary materials to and from school independently (with or without a checklist) by May	4 out of 5 school days	Teacher or para check-in	Daily

Time Management

Annual Goal: Student will hand in assignments on due date			
Instructional Objective or Benchmark	Evaluation		
	Criteria	Procedures	Schedule
Students will hand in 50 percent of homework assignments on time by October	50 percent	Teacher rank book	Weekly
Student will hand in 75 percent of homework assignments on time by January	75 percent	Teacher rank book	Weekly
Student will hand in 90 percent of homework assignments on time by June	90 percent	Teacher rank book	Weekly