



Executive Functioning Skills Checklist

ADHD involves **impairments to executive functions**, otherwise called **executive dysfunction**. But what are they, exactly?

Executive functions are self-regulating skills that you use every day to perform almost all tasks or activities.

Children with ADHD have different executive dysfunctions to varying degrees.

12 executive functions and how their impairment might appear in a 7-year-old girl with ADHD.

- **Attention**

She has a hard time staying focused on tasks, especially ones that aren't interesting to her.

Frequently daydreams or gets distracted by her own thoughts or things going on around her.

- **Time management**

She doesn't have a good understanding of how long it takes to do things, and she is often rushed, late, or running out of time.

Difficulty meeting deadlines and following a schedule

- **Task initiation**

She'll procrastinate or avoid starting tasks, especially tasks that seem boring or difficult.

Needs frequent reminders or external cues to begin activities, even ones that are part of her daily routine.



- **Problem-solving**

She struggles to break tasks or problems down into smaller, more manageable steps. If she encounters a challenge, she is quickly frustrated or gives up.

- **Flexibility**

She has difficulty adapting to changes in plans or routines. Might be upset or act rigid when things don't go according to plan.

- **Motivation**

She'll be unmotivated to do tasks that she doesn't enjoy or that don't provide immediate gratification. She might need a lot of encouragement or small incentives to stay engaged in something.

- **Organization**

She has trouble keeping track of her belongings and will lose things like toys, school supplies, and homework. Difficulty keeping areas clean and organized, like her school desk or bedroom.

- **Meta-cognition** (ability to self-monitor and awareness of your thoughts)

She isn't always aware of her thoughts and doesn't understand why she does certain things. She'll have difficulty evaluating her own performance and may not understand how her actions affect outcomes.

- **Emotional control**

She'll often have strong emotional reactions to minor frustrations or disappointments that seem out of proportion to the situation. Once she is upset, she'll struggle to calm back down.

- **Response inhibition** (the ability to "think before you speak")

Impulsive behaviors such as interrupting conversations, blurting out answers or acting without thinking about the consequences. Struggles to pause and think about alternatives before she speaks or acts.



- **Prioritizing**

Has a hard time determining which tasks are most important or urgent.
Spends time on other activities instead of focusing and doing the task at hand.

- **Planning**

Multi-step tasks are difficult for her, and she'll struggle to plan ahead or think it through first.
Approaches tasks haphazardly without a clear idea of what she should do first.