

Developmental List Of Executive Function Skills

From Executive Function Skills in Children and Adolescents, by Peg Dawson and Richard Guare

Preschool

- Run simple errands (e.g., “Get your shoes from the bedroom”).
- Tidy bedroom or playroom with assistance.
- Perform simple chores and self-help tasks with reminders (e.g., clear dishes from table, brush teeth, get dressed).
- Inhibit behaviors: don’t touch a hot stove; don’t run into the street; don’t grab a toy from another child; don’t hit, bite, push, etc.

Kindergarten – Grade 2

- Run errands (two to three step directions).
- Tidy bedroom or playroom.
- Perform simple chores, self-help tasks; may need reminders (e.g., make bed).
- Bring papers to and from school.
- Complete homework assignments (20-minute maximum).
- Decide how to spend money (allowance).
- Inhibit behaviors: follow safety rules, don’t swear, raise hand before speaking in class, keep hands to self.

Grades 3–5

- Run errands (may involve time delay or greater distance, such as going to a nearby store or remembering to do something after school).
- Tidy bedroom or playroom (may include vacuuming, dusting, etc.).
- Perform chores that take 15–30 minutes (e.g., clean up after dinner, rake leaves).
- Bring books, papers, assignments to and from school.
- Keep track of belongings when away from home.
- Complete homework assignments (1 hour maximum).

Grades 3–5 (continued)

- Plan simple school project such as book reports (select book, read book, write report).
- Keep track of changing daily schedule (i.e., different activities after school).
- Save money for desired objects, plan how to earn money.
- Inhibit/self-regulate: behave when teacher is out of the classroom; refrain from rude comments, temper tantrums, bad manners.

Grades 6—8

- Help out with chores around the home, including both daily responsibilities and occasional tasks (e.g., emptying dishwasher, raking leaves, shoveling snow); tasks may take 60—90 minutes to complete. Baby-sit younger siblings or for pay.
- Use system for organizing schoolwork, including assignment book, notebooks, etc. Follow complex school schedule involving changing teachers and changing schedules.
- Plan and carry out long-term projects, including tasks to be accomplished and reasonable timeline to follow; may require planning multiple large projects simultaneously.
- Plan time, including after school activities, homework, family responsibilities; estimate how long it takes to complete individual tasks and adjust schedule to fit.
- Inhibit rule breaking in the absence of visible authority.

High school

- Manage schoolwork effectively on a day-to-day basis, including completing and handing in assignments on time, studying for tests, creating and following timelines for long-term projects, and making adjustments in effort and quality of work in response to feedback from teachers and others (e.g., grades on tests, papers).
- Establish and refine a long-term goal and make plans for meeting that goal. If the goal beyond high school is college, the youngster selects appropriate courses and maintains grade point average (GPA) to ensure acceptance into college. The youngster also participates in extracurricular activities, signs up for and takes Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SATs) or American College Tests (ACTs) at the appropriate time and carries out the college application process. If the youngster does not plan to go to college, he or she pursues vocational courses and, if applicable, employment outside of school to ensure the training and experience necessary to obtain employment after graduation.
- Make good use of leisure time, including obtaining employment or pursuing recreational activities during the summer.
- Inhibit reckless and dangerous behaviors (e.g., use of illegal substances, sexual acting out, shoplifting, or vandalism).