

Signs of Executive Functioning Issues at Different Ages

Signs of Executive Functioning Issues in Preschool

- Gets frustrated easily and often throws things on the floor instead of asking for help.
- Has trouble following directions and often forgets what to do.
- Has frequent tantrums over things that seem fairly minor and manageable.
- Acts out aggressively instead of expressing feelings and frustrations.
- Can't master simple classroom tasks like finding things in a cubby or packing up at the end of the day.
- Frequently raises his hand but doesn't remember the answer when called on.
- Often insists on doing things a certain way and has trouble making adjustments.
- Frequently gives unrelated answers to questions during group time.

Signs of Executive Functioning Issues in Grade School

- Starts one task and gets distracted, then doesn't ever finish the original task.
- Can solve a math problem one way but gets stuck when asked to solve it using another method.
- Focuses on the least important thing you said.
- Often mixes up assignments and doesn't bring home the books and handouts needed to complete the work.
- Has a desk full of loose papers and pencil stubs. But her schoolwork folder and pencil box are empty.
- Panics when rules or routines are challenged, like going out to dinner instead of ordering in because it's Friday and that's pizza night.
- Struggles to find the right information in a word problem to come up with an equation.
- Sticks with a plan even when it's clear that the plan isn't working.

Signs of Executive Functioning Issues in Middle School

- Wants to invite kids over but never gets around to scheduling it.
- Hesitates to make afterschool plans and instead just follows what the other kids are doing.
- Is still arranging materials in science lab while the other kids are halfway through the experiment.
- Has a hard time starting a big assignment and focuses on the less important details first.
- Frequently gets upset about small things like running out of his favorite snack at home.
- Often thinks the teacher is being "unfair" when he's told to do his work at home, even though the other kids finished theirs in class.

Signs of Executive Functioning Issues at Different Ages (*continued*)

Signs of Executive Functioning Issues in High School

- Has trouble finishing short-answer tests in the time allotted.
- Doesn't know when she's overstayed her welcome at a friend's house.
- Loses track of time and is often still "in the middle of something."
- Has trouble working in groups and complains the other kids aren't working with her.
- Hasn't filled out any of the job applications that have been sitting on her desk for a month.
- Finds it hard to incorporate feedback into work or an activity.
- Tries to convince you to extend her curfew but can't give any good reasons why.
- Tends to be impulsive and engages in risky behaviors.