



Where Is Executive Function Hiding?

A One-Page Clinical Quick Guide

Executive function shows up in more places than we realize. Use this quick guide to look beyond the observable concern and consider the executive function skills that may be involved.

WHAT YOU MIGHT SEE	EF AREAS TO CONSIDER
"I don't know what to do."	Initiation • Working Memory • Planning
Needs repeated reminders	Working Memory • Regulation/Engagement • Metacognition
Becomes overwhelmed when plans change	Flexibility • Regulation • Interoception
Takes a long time to get started	Initiation • Planning • Time Awareness
Rushes through work	Response Regulation • Time • Metacognition
Gives up when something is hard	Persistence • Regulation • Flexibility
Struggles to join or sustain play	Initiation • Flexibility • Working Memory • Perspective Taking
Loses track during conversations	Working Memory • Regulation • Perspective Taking
Can't find materials or belongings	Organization • Planning • Working Memory
Uses a skill inconsistently	Look beyond skill alone: state, environment, demands, supports, and context may matter

DON'T STOP AT WHAT YOU SEE

Observe > Get Curious > Consider EF > Consider the Body & Context > Support Access + Teach Skills

Executive function is invisible.

Interoception is internal.

Behavior is shaped by many factors.

Regulation is complex.

A child's experience may be difficult to put into words, so...

...we make it visible.