



## Executive Function

In occupational therapy literature, executive functioning (EF) and its effect on occupational performance are receiving increasing attention. Executive functioning refers to the ability to plan, initiate, organize, connect information, transition, shift mindsets, set goals, prioritize, remember, and self-monitor. As occupational therapists, we have the skill and position within the system to identify students who have difficulty performing the tasks they need to do, want to do, or are expected to do due to EF challenges. By identifying them early, occupational therapists can provide targeted interventions before secondary and lifelong effects arise.

### Different Types of Executive Functioning Skills

Task Initiation	Time Management	Perseverance
Organization	Self-Control	Attention
Working Memory	Metacognition	Flexibility

### Strategies for Struggles

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making checklists</li> <li>• Setting time limits</li> <li>• Using a schedule or planner</li> <li>• Explanation of why a strategy works</li> <li>• Exploring other learning styles (visual, hands-on, auditorily)</li> <li>• Creating a routine</li> <li>• Introducing a rewards system</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage child in interests they bring them joy</li> <li>• Address child's stressors in life to bring about calmness</li> <li>• Have the child participate in different types of exercise</li> <li>• Give child a sense of belonging and social acceptance</li> <li>• Address child's emotional and social development</li> <li>• Address child's physical development</li> </ul> |
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### References

- Ehmke, R. (2023). Helping kids who struggle with executive functions. *Child Mind Institute*. <https://childmind.org/article/helping-kids-who-struggle-with-executive-functions/>
- Rutta, R. M., Kumar, S., Pisharody, V., Irwin, K. C., Baker, N., Marfeo, E., & Morris, M. (2021). Mindfulness and executive functioning in preadolescents and adolescents: A scoping review. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 75(2). <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2021.75S2-RP329>