



EXECUTIVE FUNCTION:

Understanding how gifted characteristics interfere with EF skills

ORGANIZATION

GIFTED CHARACTERISTICS

- Acquire and retain information quickly
- Make connections
- Deeper and detailed conclusions

EFFECT ON EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

- More data to organize
- Deeper (slower) processing speed
- May have a 'better way'

PRIORITIZATION

GIFTED CHARACTERISTICS

- Insatiable curiosity
- Varied Interests
- Intense focus on areas of strength

EFFECT ON EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

- Priority based on interest
- Due dates compromised
- Lack of time awareness

INITIATION

GIFTED CHARACTERISTICS

- Preoccupied with (many) thoughts
- Asynchrony
- Perfectionism

EFFECT ON EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

- Difficulty focusing
- Immaturity and impulsivity
- Afraid to take risks or ask questions

PLANNING

GIFTED CHARACTERISTICS

- Divergent thinking
- Creative, vivid imagination
- Prefer free flow of ideas
- Deep thinkers

EFFECT ON EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

- Spontaneous rather than linear thinker ('hurricane')
- Making assignments unduly complex
- Skewed concept of time

WORKING MEMORY

GIFTED CHARACTERISTICS

- Keen observer
- Intuitive learner
- Prefer meaningful connections

EFFECT ON EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

- Thought process interrupted
- Inability to show work
- Assignments need relevance for motivation

SUSTAINING ATTENTION

GIFTED CHARACTERISTICS

- Acquires and retains information quickly
- Makes connections quickly
- Highly creative
- Needs to move

EFFECT ON EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

- Material must be novel
- Boredom affects focus
- Impatient waiting for others
- Needs kinesthetic assignments





EXECUTIVE FUNCTION STRATEGIES:

Applying 'The Four C's' allows you to strengthen your EF skills

COMPASSION

- Have patience with yourself! Executive Functions are LEARNED SKILLS.
- Check in with yourself regularly: is your system working for you? If not, it's time to try something new.
- Set up yourself for success: allow more time than you think you'll need.
- Start your day from a place of passion! Resist trying to get the 'hard stuff' done first. Beginning with interests ignites energy and motivation.

COLLABORATION

Collaborate with your partner and/or your employer:

- Share the strategies and systems that work for you with your employer and/or partner.
- Communicate when you're having a bad executive function day, and don't be afraid to ask for support.
- Utilize virtual collaboration, too! What are your support apps? Reminder apps? How do you best communicate (ie. via email, text or phone calls)?

CLARITY

- Set clear, concise, consistent and **appropriate** expectations for yourself. Avoid 'biting off more than you can chew' or 'burning the candle at both ends.' What is a realistic deadline? Under promise and over deliver.
- Break down large tasks and projects into small steps to avoid overwhelm.
- When a project becomes overwhelming, focus on one step at a time.
- Once you set your goals, determine how to measure your progress.

CREATIVITY

There are ways to have fun while learning executive functioning skills!

- Think about how you organize your music - you used EF skills without even knowing! Is your music arranged by genre, activity, artist? How did you decide? Apply this process to other areas.
- Plan a real or fictitious vacation. Consider all the details - times, dates, food, clothing, lodging, tickets. All those details require focus, planning, prioritizing and organization.
- Play the sandwich game with a friend, partner or your child - tell them the steps for making a PB&J sandwich and have them do EXACTLY what you say. "Put PB on the bread" means put the PB jar directly on the loaf of bread. Learn to be specific. Break down the tasks into small steps.

