

The Executive Skills Questionnaire for Teens and Parents

by Richard Guare, Ph.D., Peg Dawson, Ed.D, and Colin Guare



From the ADHD Experts at

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Strategies and Support for ADHD & LD

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CONTACT INFORMATION

New Hope Media 646-366-0830
108 West 39th St, Suite 805
New York, NY 10018

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These executive skills questionnaires will help you and your teen assess her executive skills weaknesses. You complete the first one, and then have your teen complete the second. Read, “What to Do with the Results” to compare executive skill profiles and start a conversation about effective compensating strategies.

The Executive Skills Questionnaire – Parent Version

Rate each item below based on how well it describes your teen, using this rating scale to choose the appropriate score. Then add the three scores in each section. Use the key at the end to determine your teen’s strongest executive skills (the two or three sections with the lowest scores) and his weakest executive skills (those with the highest scores).

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Tend to disagree
4. Neutral
5. Tend to agree
6. Agree
7. Strongly agree

ITEM	SCORE
1. Acts on impulse.	_____
2. Gets in trouble for talking too much in class.	_____
3. Says things without thinking.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	

4. Says, “I’ll do it later” and then forgets about it.	_____
5. Forgets homework assignments or forgets to take home needed materials.	_____
6. Loses or misplaces belongings such as coats, gloves, sports equipment, etc.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	

ITEM	SCORE
7. Gets annoyed when homework is too hard or confusing or takes too long to finish.	_____
8. Has a short fuse – easily frustrated.	_____
9. Is easily upset when things don't go as planned.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	

10. Has trouble thinking of a different solution to a problem if the first one doesn't work.	_____
11. Resists changes in plans or routines.	_____
12. Has problems with open-ended homework assignments (e.g., doesn't know what to write about when given creative writing assignments).	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	

13. Has difficulty paying attention – easily distracted.	_____
14. Runs out of steam before finishing homework or other tasks.	_____
15. Has problems sticking with schoolwork or chores until they are done.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	

16. Puts off homework or chores until the last minute.	_____
17. Has difficulty setting aside fun activities in order to start homework.	_____
18. Needs many reminders to start chores.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	

ITEM	SCORE
19. Has trouble planning for big assignments (knowing what to do first, second, etc.).	_____
20. Has difficulty setting priorities when he/she has a lot of things to do.	_____
21. Becomes overwhelmed by long-term projects or big assignments.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	

22. Has disorganized backpack and notebooks.	_____
23. Leaves desk or workspace at home or school messy.	_____
24. Has trouble keeping bedroom or locker tidy.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	

25. Has a hard time estimating how long it takes to do something (such as homework).	_____
26. Often doesn't finish homework at night; rushes to get it done in school before class.	_____
27. Is slow getting ready for things (e.g., appointments, school, changing classes).	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	

28. Can't seem to save up money for a desired object – problems delaying gratification.	_____
29. Doesn't see the value of earning good grades to achieve a long-term goal.	_____
30. Seems to live in the present.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	

ITEM	SCORE
------	-------

31. Lacks effective study strategies. _____

32. Doesn't check work for mistakes even when the stakes are high. _____

33. Doesn't evaluate performance and change tactics to increase success. _____

TOTAL SCORE:

KEY	
ITEMS	EXECUTIVE SKILL
1–3	Response Inhibition
4–6	Working memory
7–9	Emotional control
10–12	Flexibility
13–15	Sustained attention
16–18	Task initiation
19–21	Planning/prioritizing
22–24	Organization
25–27	Time management
28–30	Goal-directed persistence
31–33	Metacognition

Your teen's strongest executive skills (lowest scores):

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Your teen's weakest executive skills (highest scores):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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The Executive Skills Questionnaire – Teen Version

Rate each item below based on how well it describes you, using this rating scale to choose the appropriate score. Then add the three scores in each section. Use the key at the end to determine your strongest executive skills (the two or three sections with the lowest scores) and your weakest executive skills (those with the highest scores).

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Tend to disagree
4. Neutral
5. Tend to agree
6. Agree
7. Strongly agree

ITEM	SCORE
1. I act on impulse.	_____
2. I get in trouble for talking too much in class.	_____
3. I say things without thinking.	_____
	TOTAL SCORE:

4. I say, "I'll do it later" and then forget about it.	_____
5. I forget homework assignments or forget to take home needed materials.	_____
6. I lose or misplace belonging such as coats, gloves, sports equipment, etc.	_____
	TOTAL SCORE:

ITEM	SCORE
7. I get annoyed when homework is too hard or confusing or takes too long to finish.	_____
8. I have a short fuse – am easily frustrated.	_____
9. I get upset when things don't go as planned.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	

10. If the first solution to a problem doesn't work, I have trouble thinking of a different one.	_____
11. I get upset when I have to change plans or routines.	_____
12. I have problems with open ended homework assignments (e.g., deciding what to write about when given creative writing assignments).	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	

13. I have difficulty paying attention and am easily distracted.	_____
14. I run out of steam before finishing homework or other tasks.	_____
15. I have problems sticking with schoolwork or chores until they are done.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	

16. I put off homework or chores until the last minute.	_____
17. I have difficulty setting aside fun activities in order to start homework.	_____
18. I need to be reminded to start chores or homework	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	

ITEM	SCORE
19. I have trouble planning for big assignments (knowing what to do first, second, etc.).	_____
20. I have difficulty setting priorities when I have a lot of things to do.	_____
21. I become overwhelmed by long-term projects or big assignments.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	

22. My backpack and notebooks aren't organized.	_____
23. My desk or workspace at home or school is a mess.	_____
24. I have trouble keeping my bedroom or locker tidy.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	

25. I have a hard time estimating how long it takes to do something (such as homework).	_____
26. I often don't finish homework at night and may rush to get it done in school before class.	_____
27. I need a lot of time to get ready for things (e.g., appointments, school, changing classes).	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	

28. I can't seem to save up money for a desired object – problems delaying gratification.	_____
29. I don't see the point of earning good grades to achieve a long-term goal.	_____
30. I prefer to live in the present.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	

ITEM	SCORE
------	-------

31. I don't have very effective study strategies. _____

32. I tend not to check my work for mistakes even when the stakes are high. _____

33. I don't evaluate my performance and change tactics to increase success. _____

TOTAL SCORE:

KEY	
ITEMS	EXECUTIVE SKILL
1–3	Response Inhibition
4–6	Working memory
7–9	Emotional control
10–12	Flexibility
13–15	Sustained attention
16–18	Task initiation
19–21	Planning/prioritizing
22–24	Organization
25–27	Time management
28–30	Goal-directed persistence
31–33	Metacognition

Your strongest executive skills (lowest scores):

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Your weakest executive skills (highest scores):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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What to Do with the Results

Start by comparing your estimates of your teen's executive skills strengths and weaknesses (the two to three lowest and highest scores, respectively) with your teen's estimates. The actual scores are less important than the listings of strengths and weaknesses. If they are very close, then you and your teen share similar perceptions of strengths and weaknesses. You might want to spend a few minutes talking about both the strengths and the weaknesses, beginning with the strengths. Share with your teenager how you see him drawing on his strengths in everyday life. Be specific in coming up with examples of how you've seen him use those strengths to manage task demands, solve problems, or handle sticky situations. Don't skimp on recognizing his strengths (remember: three positives for every corrective/negative observation!). If your child has a strength that is one of your weaknesses it wouldn't hurt to say something like "I really admire the way you can...[accept constructive criticism, not put things off to the last minute, keep your desktop organized, etc.]. I wish I could do that better."

Next talk about the areas of weakness. Here, take your cues from your teenager. Have your daughter identify a weakness and talk about how it affects her ability to do something that's important to her. You might talk about how it's helpful to get a full picture of what's going on. "Now I see why you're late getting places. Time management is really hard for you, isn't it?"

But what if you and your child disagree on the profile? What if your teen sees as a strength what you see as a weakness? The temptation will be for you to amass evidence for why your teen is mistaken and hurl it at him. "Give me a break," you might want to say when your son thinks working memory is a strength for him. "Once a week for the last month you've called and asked me to bring you a homework assignment you left on your desk!" We would caution against taking this approach because it is likely to make your teen defensive and prompt an argument rather than an honest appraisal. A better approach would be to make a neutral comment. "Hmm, that's interesting, you and I see pretty differently, don't we?" You might suggest that the difference in perception may be a cause for some of your conflicts. "You see yourself as having a great working memory – that must be why you get so aggravated when I say something to you like 'Did you remember to put your homework in your backpack?'"

Even if you disagree on what executive skills may be involved, the next step is to begin to tackle the situations that are either a source of family conflict or the ones that you deem as undermining your child's chance of success in whatever endeavor she is undertaking. The approach you will take depends

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in part on how your child responds to the feedback you give her indicating that there's a problem that needs to be addressed.

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A Parent's Guide to Effective ADHD Discipline

A better-behavior plan for the most oppositional, defiant children

Nothing works. You take away electronics or special activities, and he couldn't care less. You try rewards, points, praise, consequences – nothing turns around his behavior. He shows no remorse, and you feel like a failed parent. Sound familiar? This eBook, filled with expert tips and solutions is a game-changer.

>> Learn more about this eBook: <http://additu.de/disciplinebook>

A Parent's Guide to ADHD Diet & Nutrition

An ADDitude eBook on food, supplements, herbs, and your child.

What is an ADHD diet? Is sugar evil? What about gluten? Understanding the connection between the food your child eats and his or her hyperactivity, focus, and impulsivity is not easy. Which is why the ADDitude editors have pulled together all the science-based facts you need to know about ADHD, diet & nutrition in this 43-page eBook.

>> Learn more about this eBook: <http://additu.de/nutrition>

ADHD Medication and Treatment

Everything you need to know about medication options, minimizing side effects, alternative therapies, and more.

You're relieved to know, finally, that your child's symptoms have a name. Or that your inability to focus or pay attention in school as a child – or at work as an adult is due to attention deficit disorder. But now, you have questions about treatment. This eBook has answers.

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FREE ADDitude Downloads

10 Rules for Parents of Defiant Kids with ADHD

A quick reference card with ten rules that make saying calm, and keeping kids from melting down a little bit easier.

10 Books for Your ADHD Library

This list contains the best resources to understand this complex diagnosis, keep up with ever-changing treatment methods, and learn what it's really like to live with ADHD.

A Parent's Guide to ADHD Medications

Find expert explanations regarding how to determine the right medication and dosage, monitor a medication's effectiveness, and solve common problems like side effects.

What to Eat – And Avoid – to Improve ADHD Sym- toms

It's not always easy to eat healthy. That's why this download breaks it down into nine easy-to-follow rules for people with ADHD.

Secrets of the ADHD Brain

Learn why people with ADHD can't just be like neurotypicals, and why they shouldn't try to be. Learn how to succeed on your own terms.

5 Mindfulness Exercises for Students with ADHD

Learn how to promote greater academic focus and collaborative learning by introducing meditation and yoga to your student or your child.

**Find these and many
more free ADHD
resources online at:**
[http://additu.de/
freedownloads](http://additu.de/freedownloads)

Expert Webinar Replays:

How to Unleash Your Teen's Superpowers

>> <http://additu.de/super>

Tweens and teens with ADHD today are pioneers, maneuvering through the unexplored terrain and challenges of the digital age. It's easy to see why our kids begin to believe their self-worth is measured in "Likes," rather than a strong sense of inner self. The fact is, these amazing young adults need new tools to succeed on their exciting journey, while still maintaining an authentic sense of self. Stacey Turis explains how to give the future generation the building blocks and confidence necessary to flip their superhero capes and soar.

Empower Your Teen to Succeed in College

>> <http://additu.de/college-transition>

Difficulties with executive functioning and self-management skills make it hard for teens with ADHD/LD to handle all the responsibilities they have to take on at college. Without realizing it, well-meaning parents fall into the trap of acting as their teen's personal assistant or concierge. Parents try to look ahead to anticipate problems, do all the thinking to prevent problems, and fix any that occur. While this parenting style might work in the short run, it backfires in the long run as students with ADHD/LD enter college. Theresa Laurie Maitland, Ph.D., explains what to do differently.

Practical Organization and Time Management Strategies for Middle and High Schoolers with ADHD

>> <http://additu.de/organizational-skills>

You know how challenging staying organized is for kids with ADHD. Students today have more demands, distractions and busier schedules than ever before. Using the strategies, tips, and resources offered by Michelle Cooper and Michelle Grey, parents can improve their children's organizational and time management skills and thus their academic success.

Teaching Life Skills to Children and Teens with ADHD

>> <http://additu.de/teenlife>

Devising a balanced treatment plan helps set kids with ADHD up for success in life, but there are skills that medication cannot teach. Vincent Monastral, Ph.D., explains how to teach tweens to communication skills, build confidence, foster strength to fight teasing, and devise organization systems.

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Expert advice on managing your household, time, money, career, and relationships

Parenting ADHD and LD Children

Strategies and support for parents on behavior and discipline, time management, disorganization, and making friends.

ADHD and LD at School

How to get classroom accommodations, finish homework, work with teachers, find the right schools, and much more.

Treating ADHD

Treatment options for attention deficit including medications, food, supplements, brain training, mindfulness and other alternative therapies.

For Women with ADHD

Managing ADHD on the job, running a household, dealing with challenging emotions, and much more.