

# Signs of Executive Functioning Issues at Different Ages

## Signs of Executive Functioning Issues in Preschool

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- 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

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- 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

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- 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

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