



Cooper's Counselor Corner

October 2021



PARENT RESOURCE CENTER

Upcoming Seminars

Sibshops-Virtual Workshops for Brothers and Sisters of children with Special Needs. Register [HERE](#)



Dinner Conversation Starters

1. If you were stranded on an island and could only have three items, what would they be and why (there is no electricity 😊).
2. Describe a small gesture(action) you made to another person that you feel had a big impact on him/her?

Getting into the Groove with Executive Function Skills

From morning routines to night-time homework sessions, we have entered a new phase in our lives. A phase, that due to COVID, we have not experienced in way too long.

We all know that the struggles are real and that our kids may be having a hard time getting back into the groove of in-person learning. 😊 There are several skills that could greatly help our students and these skills can be introduced and reinforced at home.

This term covers a lot of territory: organization, follow through, time management, prioritizing, self-monitoring and shifting gears.

Executive skills begin to develop at the infant and toddler stages and continue to develop well into adolescence and early adulthood. These skills are helpful in any setting in our lives, but certainly in school. We can support these skills by reinforcing them in the home setting as well.

Let's begin with **prioritizing**. This can be a difficult skill to master. It can be overwhelming for a middle schooler with several upcoming deadlines to figure out what needs to be done when. I would say start with paper and list all the things needing to be done with the date due next to them. Number the list in order of the date due beginning with the date closest to the present and then out from there. How can you reinforce this from home? Perhaps there are three chores you would like your child to complete. Give them the chores and have them prioritize them. When completed, talk with your child about how/why they prioritized the way they did. Listen to what they are saying and make sure they understand that sometimes there is indeed, a right and wrong way.

Another great skill is the ability to **shift gears**. That lies at the heart of resilience; it is adaptability in the face of a changing environment. The ease in which this skill develops is certainly related to your child's temperament, but it absolutely can be practiced and achieved early on. Addressing the issue when things/life don't go according to plan. This skill can be addressed at every turn from a young age.

The **ability to follow through** is another skill that is so important. Requiring our kids to COMPLETE tasks, follow through with commitments and keep their word can also be started at such an early age. When we require these things from our children at home with family, friends, teams, and themselves, we are encouraging our kids to know that following through is an important and necessary part of life. When we encourage/require this, we are also encouraging self-respect and resilience.

Organization can be tough. What is sometimes hard to remember is that each of us must devise a system that makes sense to us. It is in our deepest fibers to organize. Think of small children sorting colors, shapes and even people. It is their effort to organize and make sense of external surroundings. We can support that and go further with collecting and organizing clothing, books, and toys.

The last skill I will mention here is **self-monitoring**. This skill covers a lot of territory and has both simple and very complex parts to it. Self-monitoring is our ability to reflect and evaluate our behavior, progress, and even inhibit reactions. Much of this skill comes with maturity, but like the other skills, we can begin at an early age with discussions revolving around cause and effect (behavior and consequences), "reading the room" (appropriate responses and actions) just to name a few.

We must remember that none of these behaviors nor skill acquisition happen in a vacuum. They are connected and do begin in the earliest ages. **But it is never too late to start to work on these at home as well as school.**

YOUR COOPER COUNSELORS

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7th Grade: A – K

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