

# coffee with the counselor

## executive functioning workshop

**boosting your child's brain:**

building executive functioning skills at home



**giving caregivers  
crucial information  
about executive  
functioning skills  
and providing them  
tools to use at home**

- **Defining Executive Functioning Skills**
  - Self-Control
  - Emotion Regulation
  - Working Memory
  - Focus
  - Time Management
  - Resilience
  - Task Initiation
  - Organization

- **Development of EF**
- **Day in the Life**
  - EF Skills Used at Home and at School
- **Strategies That Work**
  - Two Strategies For Each EF Skill
- **Q&A**

**presentation outline**

## executive functioning

EF skill	the ability to...
self-control	pause, think, and choose helpful/safe actions
emotion regulation	notice, understand, and manage big feelings
working memory	hold information in your mind and use it to complete tasks
focus	pay attention and stay on task (even with distractions)
time management	understand time and plan ahead, prioritize
resilience	handling challenges, recover from mistakes, and keep trying when things are difficult
task initiation	begin a task right away
organization	keep materials, thoughts, and tasks in order

## different brains, different timelines

- develops from early childhood into adulthood
- varies widely among children
- challenges may occur with or without diagnosis
- strongly shaped by environmental and adult support

## morning at home

- planning and organization: choosing clothes and gathering materials
- working memory: remembering the morning routine
- task initiation: getting started without reminders
- emotional regulation: handling stress when things feel rushed

## self-control



- hitting the pause button**  
Ask, "What might happen if you do that?" OR "What is another choice you could make right now?"
- talking about choices and consequences**  
Ask, "What choice did you make?" OR "What happened because of that choice?"

## working memory



### visual routine chart

Start by identifying the routine your child struggles with the most. This might be getting ready in the morning, after school, or getting ready for bed.

### designated spot for important items

What items does your child tend to lose track of the most? Choose one specific place for those items to live.

## lunch

**self-control:** waiting in line, keeping hands to self, and eating appropriately

**resiliency:** adjusting when plans change i.e., sitting with a different group, dealing with missing foods

**emotion-regulation:** managing frustration when having limited time to eat

**time management:** finishing lunch in time before transitioning to the next activity

## evening at home

**task initiation:** getting started on homework/chores

**focus:** staying on task without giving in to distractions i.e. people talking, tv, pet, toys

**emotion-regulation:** managing frustration when having to do a non-preferred task before engaging in a more fun activity

**time management:** getting tasks done efficiently to allow for down time, dinner, and bedtime routine

*Will my child grow out of executive functioning challenges?*

# A follow along note taking guide for caregivers to identify EF skills to strengthen at home with their child.

**executive functioning caregiver workshop**

**self-control**

- hitting the pause button
- talking about choices and consequences

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**emotion-regulation**

- practicing coping skills
- paying attention to body cues

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**working memory**

- visual routine chart
- designated spot for important items

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**focus**

- spend time in nature
- remove distractions

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**time management**

- set a timer
- break tasks down

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**resilience**

- positive affirmations
- problem solving

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**task initiation**

- identify the first step
- count down

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**organization**

- 5-minute reset routine
- sort and store

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What strategies do you want to focus on first with your child at home?

**strategy #1:** \_\_\_\_\_

I will use this strategy when...

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**strategy #2:** \_\_\_\_\_

I will use this strategy when...

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**strategy #3:** \_\_\_\_\_

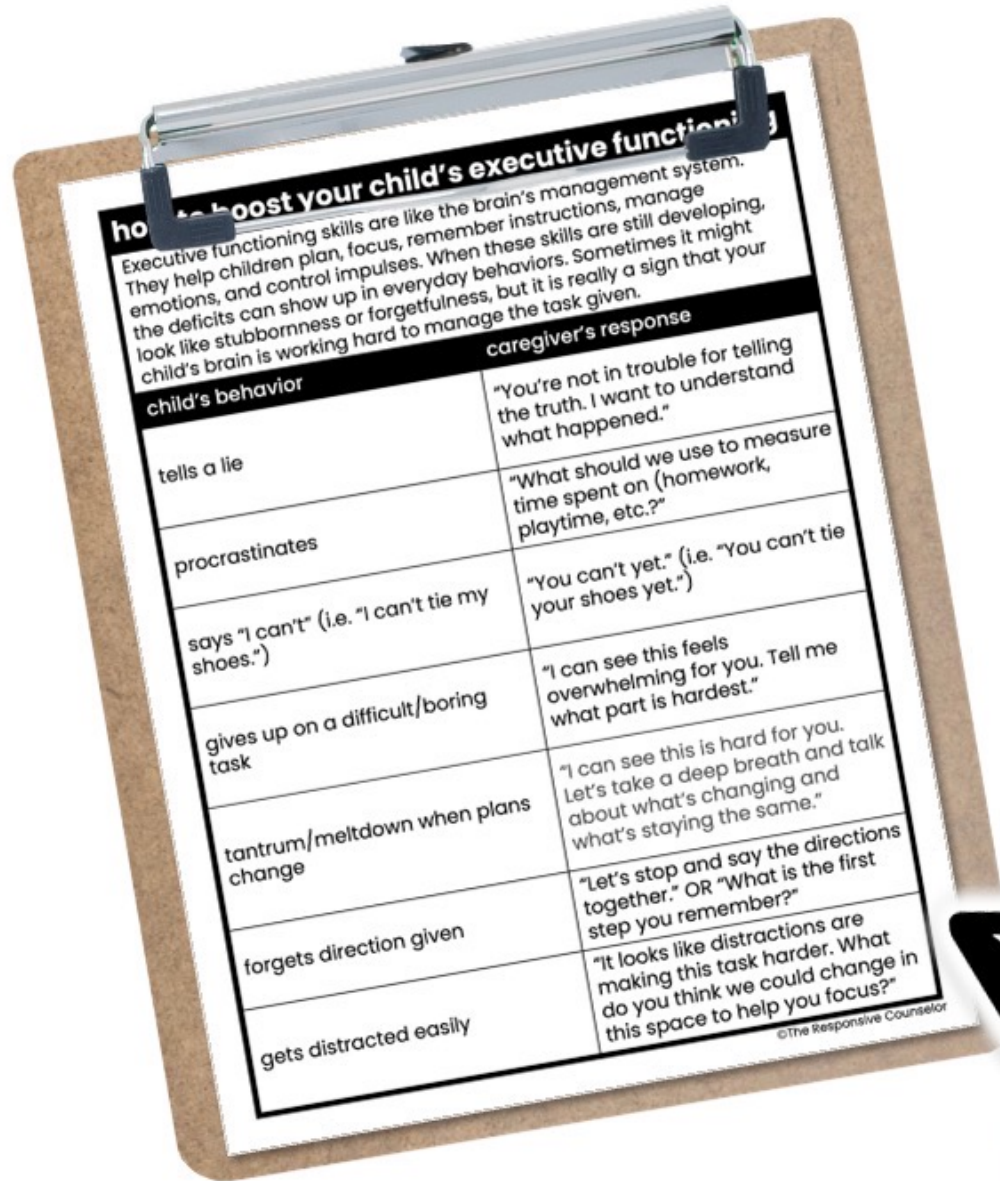
I will use this strategy when...

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make and take



### how to boost your child's executive functioning

Executive functioning skills are like the brain's management system. They help children plan, focus, remember instructions, manage emotions, and control impulses. When these skills are still developing, the deficits can show up in everyday behaviors. Sometimes it might look like stubbornness or forgetfulness, but it is really a sign that your child's brain is working hard to manage the task given.

child's behavior	caregiver's response
tells a lie	"You're not in trouble for telling the truth. I want to understand what happened."
procrastinates	"What should we use to measure time spent on (homework, playtime, etc.?)"
says "I can't" (i.e. "I can't tie my shoes.")	"You can't yet." (i.e. "You can't tie your shoes yet.")
gives up on a difficult/boring task	"I can see this feels overwhelming for you. Tell me what part is hardest."
tantrum/meltdown when plans change	"I can see this is hard for you. Let's take a deep breath and talk about what's changing and what's staying the same."
forgets direction given	"Let's stop and say the directions together." OR "What is the first step you remember?"
gets distracted easily	"It looks like distractions are making this task harder. What do you think we could change in this space to help you focus?"

Includes an easy-to-use reference guide for caregivers to feel confident in their response to their child's behavior!



take home handout

# Slideshow text is fully editable to fit the presentation to your unique needs, with suggested scripting for each slide.

The screenshot shows the EF Workshop software interface. The main slide is titled "boosting your child's brain: building executive functioning skills at home" and features a brain illustration. The interface includes a top menu bar with options like Home, Insert, Draw, Design, Transitions, Animations, Slide Show, Record, Review, View, Flat Pack, and Power Pack. A left sidebar shows a slide navigation pane with four slides: "editing directions", "boosting your child's brain: building executive functioning skills at home", "agenda", and "executive functioning". The "agenda" slide lists topics like "defining executive functioning", "development of executive functioning", "day in the life", "strategies that work", and "q/a". The "executive functioning" slide includes a table with columns for "EF skill" and "the ability to..." and lists skills such as self-control, emotion regulation, working memory, time management, resilience, task initiation, and organization.

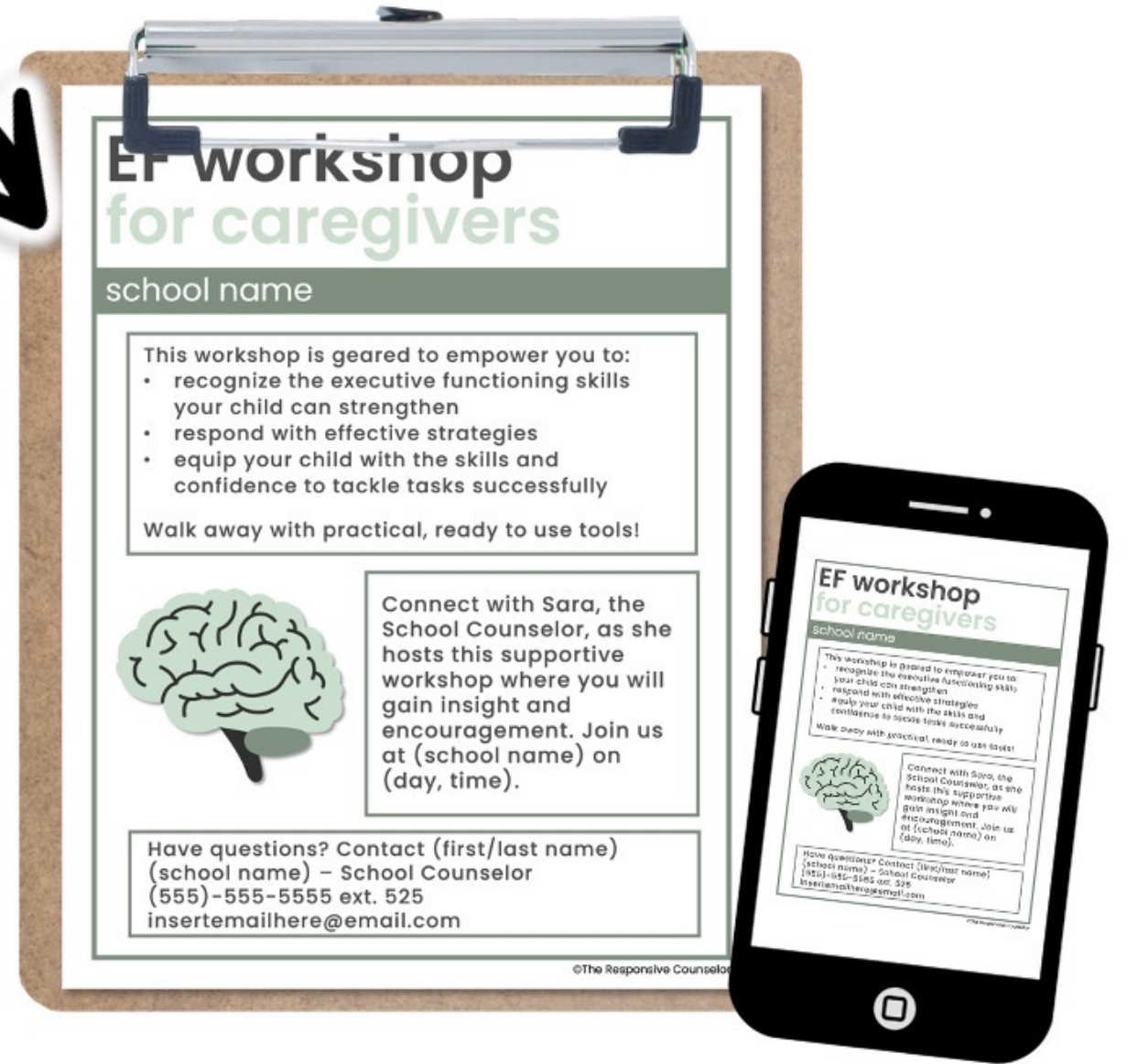
EF skill	the ability to...
self-control	pause, think, and choose happy/safe actions
emotion regulation	notice, understand, and manage big feelings
working memory	hold information in your mind and use it to complete tasks
time management	pay attention steadily on task (even with distractions)
resilience	understand the end goal, prioritize, and stay strong when things are difficult
task initiation	handle challenges, research for materials, and stay strong when things are difficult
organization	keep materials, thoughts, and tasks in order



editable

Advertise your workshop with the included flyer!

- Print and send home with students
- Save as an image and post on the school's website/social media
- Attach as a PDF to email for newsletters



promotional flyer

## What grade levels is this workshop designed for?

This workshop is designed with elementary-level families in mind. However, counselors can edit the scenarios and examples to make it geared towards middle school.

## How do I use the Google Slides version?

PowerPoint can be uploaded into your Google Drive and edited/used in Google Slides if needed.

## How long was the workshop designed for?

- 30 minutes for the slideshow
- 5-15 minutes for the q&a
- 10-15 minutes for the make and take caregiver activity

## Who can lead this workshop?

School Counselors, School Social Workers, School Psychologists, and Child Mental Health Therapists.

Hi, I'm Sara! At The Responsive Counselor, we create resources for school counselors, child therapists, and teachers that improve social emotional learning and help students be their best selves. Our focus is creating resources that are effective (using research-based best practices) and engaging (through collaborative learning and relevant scenarios) for students.

**B.A. from Michigan State University**

Psychology and Anthropology

**M.S. from Vanderbilt University**

Community, Research, and Action

**M.Ed. From Vanderbilt University**

Human Development Counseling:  
School Counseling & Mental Health

**experience**

I'm a former school counselor from a large southeastern school district with a wonderfully diverse group of students. I created and implemented a data-based comprehensive school counseling program while helping classroom teachers and administrators implement schoolwide SEL and restorative practices. Now, I share my ideas and resources to reach students and help educators across the world!



**let's connect:**

