



Children's Executive Function Skills Detailed

Working Memory	Working memory is a child's ability to retain facts for longer than just that moment in time. It needs to be able to recall positive facts about a parent and not the fictions that the other parent is trying to replace them with. Alienated children are bombarded with false memories and this impedes their working memory of the true facts.
Emotional Control	Emotional Control involves understanding the borders and boundaries of the child's emotions and feelings in a healthy positive way by giving appropriate emotional responses to events and maintaining self-control, no matter what the present mental state. It involves controlling defensiveness, or loss of concentration due to unresolved issues, and not feeling like emotions are all over the place. Alienated children have so many conflicting emotions, that they literally split emotionally, mentally and more.
Sustained Attention	As the name suggests, is the ability to stay on task and not get lost, being able to persist with the task at hand. In an alienated child this might look like procrastination to do school work or do chores or losing focus in a conversation especially when at the alienated parent's home where they have been told they do not need to do this.
Task Initiation	Just getting started can be difficult. From procrastination to putting it off to last minute, this lack of inaction results from executive function lags. Alienated children are often told they do not have to be ready for their other parent or be available to do their chores etc. Making task initiation confusing from one house to the other and then in the real world.
Planning and Prioritizing	Being able to put a plan into place with timely goals is important to help us remain organized and on task. Children of alienation may be able to do this with work but when it comes to home and relationships, it may not come as easily. Alienated children are told they do not have to provide information to the other parent, no less in a timely organized fashion.
Organization	Creating order, structure, tidiness that not only helps the child know what is coming up but whether anyone else can follow the direction. Alienated children may be able to do this with school or work but not at home where the trauma is. Alienated children are often taught that they do not have to be clean, tidy or organized at the other parent's home thus interfering with organizational development tasks.
Time Management	Managing your days, hours, and being able to predict with some certainty how long something will take, such as getting to appointments on time, have an importance to showing how responsible someone is. Alienated children are often taught that they do not have to be on time for anything with the other parent, thus muddling the value of this executive function skill in the real world.
Goal Directed Persistence	Working toward the completion of a goal or task allows the person to recognize successes, make choices despite distractions. Alienated children are taught that they need not do any work or show any positive movement when with the other parent, especially when it comes to their relationship. They will often be allowed to change the goal post or direction of things just to fit the alienator's needs.
Flexibility	Being flexible enables a person to grow and change with little time to adjust. Alienated children are taught that they do not have to adjust or follow the other parent's lead especially if it is last minute. Instead, they are taught to make a stink about it and this interferes with their ability at work and with others. They are actually taught to interfere with the other parents' plans.
Metacognition	There is more to things when we put them all together. It is called the 'bigger picture' and includes self-inspect. Alienated children see the world through the alienator's black and white lens. This can be confusing as it negates the child's ability to recognize their own thoughts and feelings from others and how to actually see the whole picture, and not just what the alienator wants them to see. Alienated children fail at seeing the whole situation because of false memories implanted by the alienator to skew the 'bigger picture'.

Annotated References

Reference	General Findings/Conclusions
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Smith, et al., 2016	A study published in the Journal of Emotional Abuse found that children exposed to high levels of parental alienation had significantly lower scores on measures of executive function than children who were not exposed to parental alienation
Jones, et al., 2018	Another study published in the Journal of Child Custody found that children who experienced parental alienation had difficulty with planning, problem-solving, and impulse control, all of which are components of executive function
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