

Executive Functions: Key Ingredients in Lifetime Performance

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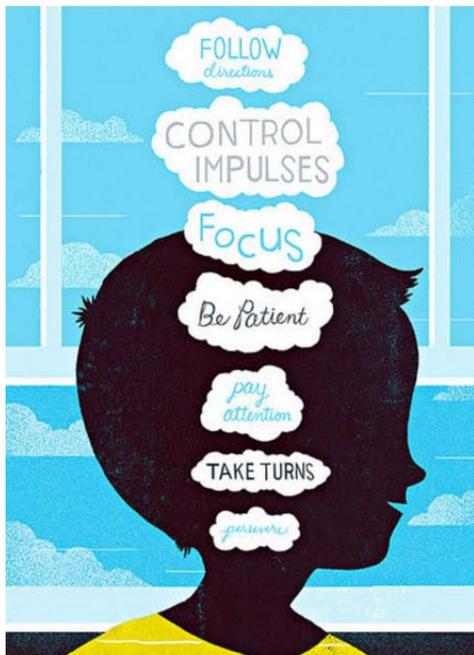


Illustration by Christopher Silas Neal

Executive function skills are fundamental to building a strong foundation for the early development of both cognitive and social competencies. Children who are able to adjust their attention, control impulses, follow rules and directions, and adjust to changing demands tend to be more successful in school and life. The three main areas of executive functions are cognitive flexibility, working memory and inhibitory control.

Cognitive flexibility refers to the ability to easily switch gears, take another perspective and adjust to changing demands. A child demonstrates cognitive flexibility when he or she is able to try different strategies to solve a problem or work out a conflict.

Working memory is the capacity to hold and manipulate information over time. This ability allows children to follow multiple step directions, take turns, effortlessly rejoin a game and relate one concept to another.

Inhibitory control describes the ability to manage thoughts and impulses. It allows children to resist temptation and actually think before they act. Children display this skill when they focus on an activity, wait to be called on before answering and ask a teacher for assistance instead of yelling at a peer.

Well-developed executive functions can lead to positive behaviors and social interactions, school achievement, better health and overall fulfillment. Because of the lifelong implications of these important skills, it is necessary for parents and educators to provide specific opportunities for young children to practice them.

Suggested resources:

Executive Function Mind in the Making video <http://bit.ly/2kVqeJR>

Center on the Developing Child: Harvard University <http://bit.ly/1P5ENyX>

RULES

Currently Open

Rule 6M-8.300, Provider and Class Registration Procedures; Application; Eligibility Determination

Rule 6M-8.201 Child Enrollment Procedure for the VPK Education Program

Rules Opening Soon

Rule 6M-8.204, Uniform Attendance Policy

Remember to check our website regularly for a listing of proposed rules and notices.

<http://bit.ly/2gkcQIN>

TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN

Preschool children make the transition into kindergarten more successfully when their schools and families prepare for it together.

Preschool and elementary programs can help children maintain and maximize the gains they made in preschool by coordinating transition efforts and ensuring that preschool and kindergarten teachers connect.

Following are links to resources for teachers, schools, providers and families to support successful transition for children entering kindergarten.

- <http://bit.ly/2fABZPn>

The Office of the Administration for Children and Families: Head Start provides family engagement strategies to involve parents in their child's transition to kindergarten, teacher and family activity calendars, and materials for delivering a regional transition to kindergarten summit for all stakeholders.

- <http://bit.ly/2jvNScl>

This site provides links to multiple resources from a variety of states and sources. They are offered to provide ideas and a springboard for prekindergarten programs and elementary schools to help provide support to both children and families during the transition from prekindergarten to kindergarten. The Office of Early Learning does not endorse any particular plan.



CHILDREN'S BOOK LIST

The following books address the topic of children getting ready for kindergarten:

- *Countdown to Kindergarten*, Alison McGhee

It's just 10 days before kindergarten, and this little girl has heard all there is to know from a first grader about what it's going to be like.

- *Kindergarten, Here I Come*, D.J. Steinberg

This picture book celebrates all the familiar milestones and moments shared by every single kindergartener.

- *Kindergarten Rocks!*, Katie Davis

Dexter already knows everything there is to know about kindergarten. His big sister, Jessie, told him all about it. So Dexter is not scared. But his stuffed dog, Rufus, is scared. Dexter, Rufus has nothing to fear: As he'll soon find out, kindergarten rocks!



- *Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come!*, Nancy Carlson

When he gets to school, though, Henry is not so sure he's ready for kindergarten. But before long Henry discovers that the only thing he's not ready for is how much fun he's going to have at school!

- *The Twelve Days of Kindergarten: A Counting Book*, Deborah Lee Rose

This book is a cumulative counting verse in which a child enumerates items in the kindergarten classroom, from the whole alphabet, A to Z, to 12 eggs for hatching.



VPK LEARNING CIRCLES

Be in the Loop!

VPK Learning Circles are ongoing opportunities for early childhood professionals to share strategies, research and best practices in VPK classrooms. Learning Circle activities include

- Practicing new ideas and skills.
- Professional networking.
- Sharing resources and experiences.
- Discussion and brainstorming solutions for challenges faced in the field.

Who should attend?

VPK providers, directors, teachers and administrators who would like an opportunity to network with other professionals in early childhood education.

Who do you contact for more information about Learning Circles?

Your local VPK Regional Facilitator organizes and facilitates the Learning Circles. You can find contact information for your regional facilitator on the OEL website at <http://bit.ly/2h2of1D>.



	January Participants	2016-17 Total Participants
Face-to-Face	172	1631
Web-based	0	342

“Laugh at yourself and children will learn to laugh at their own mistakes. A role model is a very powerful thing.” - Gigi Taylor Schweikert

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Online Courses	January Completers	2016-17 Total Completers
Mathematical Thinking for Early Learners	191	1168
Standards for Four-Year-Olds	272	2370
Emergent Literacy for VPK Instructors	434	3278
VPK Director Credential Course	119	822
Language and Vocabulary in the VPK Classroom	102	758
English Language Learners in the VPK Classroom	85	542

Florida’s Office of Early Learning in collaboration with the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) offers a variety of online and instructor-led training opportunities. To register for any of these training opportunities, please visit DCF’s training website at <http://bit.ly/1oHgYPm>.

Instructor-led Courses	January Classes	January Participants	2016-17 Total Participants
Standards for Four-Year-Olds	1	10	156
Integrating the Standards: Phonological Awareness	4	25	398
How to Administer the Florida VPK Assessment	5	43	504
VPK Assessment Instructional Implications	6	49	393
*EMEL: Making Sense of Sets and Numbers	10	99	1138
*EMEL: Counting and Operating with Numbers	8	115	382
*EMEL: Patterns, Measurement and Data	5	27	90
*EMEL: Shapes and Spatial Relationships	2	13	59

*EMEL– Early Mathematics for Early Learners