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Chapter 19

Executive functions

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Abstract

First, executive functions are defined. Then the development of executive functions in children, from infancy to 10–11 years of age, is briefly described. The relation between the speed of processing and the development of executive functions is addressed. Finally, tools and pointers for evaluating executive functioning in younger and older children are discussed. A cautionary note is sounded, in that almost no executive function measure requires only one executive function. A child might fail a working memory task because of problems with inhibitory control (not working memory), fail an inhibitory control task because of working memory problems, or fail a cognitive flexibility, planning, or reasoning task because of problems with inhibitory control or working memory.

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