



## 3–5 Years

### Self-Regulation: Executive Function

**WHEN INTRODUCED AND EMPHASIZED:** Weeks 8–9, 12–13, 15–16, 18–19, 21–22, 24–25, 27–28, 30–31, 33–34, and 36

#### BEHAVIORS TO OBSERVE

- Paying Attention and Flexibly Shifting Focus
- Holding Onto and Using Information
- Inhibiting Thoughts and Responses Inappropriate to Situation

## OBSERVATION OPPORTUNITIES

### Paying Attention and Flexibly Shifting Focus

In what ways does the child pay attention and shift his/her focus as he/she:

- stops focusing on a current task or activity and shifts attention to a new task or activity; attends to new information from the teacher (any transition after Week 8, Day 1)?
- plays a game by listening to and following directions (Week 9, Day 1 group activity)?
- readily stops “sleeping” and pretends to be an animal in *Sleeping, Sleeping, All the Children are Sleeping* (Week 12, Day 1 center activity)?

### Holding Onto and Using Information

In what ways does the child hold onto and use information as he/she:

- remembers single requests and multi-step requests to successfully transition to the next activity (any transition after Week 16, Day 2)?
- remembers the multi-step requests of the toothbrushing routine (any toothbrushing after Week 16, Day 2)?
- plays *Drum Beats* (Week 18, Day 1 group activity)?

### Inhibiting Thoughts and Responses Inappropriate to Situation

In what ways does the child inhibit thoughts and responses as he/she:

- resists temptations to continue playing or behave inappropriately when it is time to finish an activity (any cleanup period after Week 19, Day 1)?
- resists distractions and temptations during rest time (any rest time after Week 19, Day 1)?
- switches to new silly face or movement as requested (Week 22, Day 1 group activity)?



## FOLLOW-UP LEARNING SUPPORTS

### Reinforce

*The following activities are designed to support the ongoing development of executive functioning.*

#### **Paying Attention and Flexibly Shifting Focus**

- Encourage children to describe how they listen to and follow requests, maintain their focus on a task, and/or switch attention when needed.
- Invite children to play games that involve following the requests of a leader, such as *Mother, May I?* or *Red Light, Green Light*.
- Comment on children's positive actions in shifting the focus of their attention.

#### **Holding Onto and Using Information**

- Verbally acknowledge children's appropriate behaviors when they have used working memory.
- Provide multi-step requests at cleanup time or a transition time to support children's skills in remembering and following the order of requests.

#### **Using Inhibiting Thoughts and Responses Inappropriate to Situation**

- When children play *The Freeze* game, invite them to describe how easy or difficult it is to "freeze" when they hear the word "freeze."
- Switch the color rules for *Red Light, Green Light*.

### Reintroduce

*The following activities are designed to support the development of executive functioning among children who find it challenging to pay attention, flexibly shift focus, hold onto and use information, and/or inhibit thoughts and responses inappropriate to situation. The activities are also appropriate for all children.*

#### **Paying Attention and Flexibly Shifting Focus**

- Repeat the Week 8, Day 1 group activity. Remind children what it means to focus.
- Repeat the Week 9, Day 1 group activity. Remind children that this game helps us focus on what we are expected to do.
- Provide explicit guidance on what to do when we hear that a transition is about to occur, such as a five-minute warning.



## Holding Onto and Using Information

- Repeat the Week 18, Day 1 group activity. Discuss the requests in *Drum Beats* before or during the activity.
- Invite each child in a small group to say one thing he/she would like to bring on a pretend trip and to remember what other children want to bring. Examples:
  - Person one—"I am going to Grandma's house and I am bringing a teddy bear";
  - Person two—"I am going to Grandma's house and I am bringing a teddy bear and a pillow";
  - Person three—"I am going to Grandma's house and I am bringing a teddy bear, a pillow, and a blanket."

## Inhibiting Thoughts and Responses Inappropriate to Situation

- Repeat the Week 19, Day 2 group activity. Remind children to take turns.
- Play games that involve stopping one action and starting a new action, such as *Drum Beats* or "Silly Faces Song."
- Support children in playing *Hide and Seek*.