

Practical Tools for
Smart but Scattered Teens
The “Executive Skills” Program for Helping Teens Reach Their Potential
by Richard Guare, Peg Dawson, and Colin Guare
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Executive Skills Questionnaire—Parent Version
Executive Skills Questionnaire—Teen Version
Parent Assessment
Teen Assessment
Executive Skills Questionnaire for Parents
For Parents: What’s My Parenting Style?
For Teens: What Parenting Style Do My Parents Use?
How Well Does Your Teen Inhibit Impulses?
How Well Does Your Teen Use Working Memory?
How Well Does Your Teen Regulate Emotions?
How Flexible Is Your Teen?
How Well Can Your Teen Sustain Attention?
How Well Does Your Teen Initiate Nonpreferred Tasks?
How Well Does Your Teen Use Planning/Prioritizing Skills?
How Well Does Your Teen Use Organizational Skills?
How Well Does Your Teen Manage Time?
How Well Does Your Teen Persist toward a Goal?
How Well Does Your Teen Use Metacognitive Skills?
An Overview of the Coaching Process

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Executive Skills Questionnaire—Parent Version

Rate each item below based on how well it describes your teen, using this rating scale to choose the appropriate score. Then add the three scores in each section. Use the key on the next page to determine your teen's executive skills strengths (two to three lowest scores) and weaknesses (two to three highest scores).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Tend to disagree	Neutral	Tend to agree	Agree	Strongly agree

<u>Item</u>	<u>Score</u>
1. Acts on impulse.	_____
2. Gets in trouble for talking too much in class.	_____
3. Says things without thinking.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	_____
4. Says "I'll do it later" and then forgets about it.	_____
5. Forgets homework assignments or forgets to bring home needed materials.	_____
6. Loses or misplaces belongings such as coats, mittens, sports equipment, etc.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	_____
7. Gets annoyed when homework is too hard or confusing or takes too long to finish.	_____
8. Has a short fuse—easily frustrated.	_____
9. Is easily upset when things don't go as planned.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	_____
10. Has trouble thinking of a different solution to a problem if the first one doesn't work.	_____
11. Resists changes in plans or routines.	_____
12. Has problems with open-ended homework assignments (e.g., doesn't know what to write about when given a creative writing assignment).	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	_____
13. Has difficulty paying attention—easily distracted.	_____
14. Runs out of steam before finishing homework or other tasks.	_____
15. Has problems sticking with schoolwork or chores until they are done.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	_____
16. Puts off homework or chores until the last minute.	_____
17. Has difficulty setting aside fun activities to start homework.	_____
18. Needs many reminders to start chores.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	_____

(cont.)

Executive Skills Questionnaire—Parent Version (cont.)

19. Has trouble planning for big assignments (knowing what to do first, second, etc.). _____
20. Has difficulty setting priorities when he/she has a lot of things to do. _____
21. Becomes overwhelmed by long-term projects or big assignments. _____
- TOTAL SCORE:** _____
22. Has disorganized backpack and notebooks. _____
23. Leaves desk or workspace at home or school messy. _____
24. Has trouble keeping bedroom or locker tidy. _____
- TOTAL SCORE:** _____
25. Has a hard time estimating how long it takes to do something (such as homework). _____
26. Often doesn't finish homework at night; rushes to get it done in school before class. _____
27. Is slow getting ready for things (e.g., appointments, school, changing classes). _____
- TOTAL SCORE:** _____
28. Can't seem to save up money for a desired object—problems delaying gratification. _____
29. Doesn't see the value in earning good grades to achieve a long-term goal. _____
30. Seems to live in the present. _____
- TOTAL SCORE:** _____
31. Lacks effective study strategies. _____
32. Doesn't check work for mistakes even when the stakes are high. _____
33. Doesn't evaluate performance and change tactics to increase success. _____
- TOTAL SCORE:** _____

KEY					
Items	Executive skill	Items	Executive skill	Items	Executive skill
1-3	Response inhibition	13-15	Sustained attention	25-27	Time management
4-6	Working memory	16-18	Task initiation	28-30	Goal-directed persistence
7-9	Emotional control	19-21	Planning/prioritizing	31-33	Metacognition
10-12	Flexibility	22-24	Organization		

**Your teen's executive skills strengths
(lowest score)**

**Your teen's executive skills weaknesses
(highest score)**

Executive Skills Questionnaire—Teen Version

Rate each item below based on how well it describes you, using this rating scale to choose the appropriate score. Then add the three scores in each section. Use the key on the next page to determine your executive skills strengths (two to three lowest scores) and weaknesses (two to three highest scores).

- | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|------------------|---------|---------------|-------|----------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Tend to disagree | Neutral | Tend to agree | Agree | Strongly agree |

Item	Score
1. I act on impulse.	_____
2. I get in trouble for talking too much in class.	_____
3. I say things without thinking.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	_____
4. I say, "I'll do it later" and then forget about it.	_____
5. I forget homework assignments or forget to take home needed materials.	_____
6. I lose or misplace belongings such as coats, gloves, sports equipment, etc.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	_____
7. I get annoyed when homework is too hard or confusing or takes too long to finish.	_____
8. I have a short fuse—am easily frustrated.	_____
9. I get upset when things don't go as planned.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	_____
10. If the first solution to a problem doesn't work, I have trouble thinking of a different one.	_____
11. I get upset when I have to change plans or routines.	_____
12. I have problems with open-ended homework assignments (e.g., deciding what to write about when given a creative writing assignment).	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	_____
13. I have difficulty paying attention and am easily distracted.	_____
14. I run out of steam before finishing homework or other tasks.	_____
15. I have problems sticking with schoolwork or chores until they are done.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	_____
16. I put off homework or chores until the last minute.	_____
17. I have difficulty setting aside fun activities in order to start homework.	_____
18. I need to be reminded to start chores or homework.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	_____

(cont.)

Executive Skills Questionnaire—Teen Version (cont.)

19. I have trouble planning for big assignments (knowing what to do first, second, etc.). _____
20. I have difficulty setting priorities when I have a lot of things to do. _____
21. I become overwhelmed by long-term projects or big assignments. _____
- TOTAL SCORE:** _____
22. My backpack and notebooks aren't organized. _____
23. My desk or workspace at home or school is a mess. _____
24. I have trouble keeping my bedroom or locker tidy. _____
- TOTAL SCORE:** _____
25. I have a hard time estimating how long it takes to do something (such as homework). _____
26. I often don't finish homework at night and may rush to get it done in school before class. _____
27. I need a lot of time to get ready for things (e.g., appointments, school, changing classes). _____
- TOTAL SCORE:** _____
28. I can't seem to save up money for a desired object—problems delaying gratification. _____
29. I don't see the point of earning good grades to achieve a long-term goal. _____
30. I prefer to live in the present. _____
- TOTAL SCORE:** _____
31. I don't have very effective study strategies. _____
32. I tend not to check my work for mistakes even when the stakes are high. _____
33. I don't evaluate my performance and change tactics to increase success. _____
- TOTAL SCORE:** _____

KEY					
Items	Executive skill	Items	Executive skill	Items	Executive skill
1-3	Response inhibition	13-15	Sustained attention	25-27	Time management
4-6	Working memory	16-18	Task initiation	28-30	Goal-directed persistence
7-9	Emotional control	19-21	Planning/prioritizing	31-33	Metacognition
10-12	Flexibility	22-24	Organization		

**Your executive skills strengths
(lowest score)**

**Your executive skills weaknesses
(highest score)**

Parent Assessment

Which of the following response patterns does your child typically use when confronted with a problem involving executive skills weaknesses? Check off only one.

“I know I have a problem, but I can’t manage it. Can you take care of it for me?”	
“I know I have a problem, I’m open to working on it, and I’m willing to get help from someone [of my choosing] if necessary.”	
“I admit I’m having a problem. Can we work out a deal that if I take steps to handle it I get something as a reward?”	
“I guess I’m having a problem, but I’d like to handle it myself.”	
“I don’t think I have a problem, but if I do, don’t worry—I’ll take care of it.”	

Teen Assessment

Which of the following response patterns do you typically use when confronted with a problem involving executive skills weaknesses? Check off only one.

“I know I have a problem, but I can’t manage it. Can you take care of it for me?”	
“I know I have a problem, I’m open to working on it, and I’m willing to get help from someone [of my choosing] if necessary.”	
“I admit I’m having a problem. Can we work out a deal that if I take steps to handle it I get something as a reward?”	
“I guess I’m having a problem, but I’d like to handle it myself.”	
“I don’t think I have a problem, but if I do, don’t worry—I’ll take care of it.”	

Executive Skills Questionnaire for Parents

Rate each item below based on how well it describes you, using the following rating scale to choose the appropriate score. Then add the three scores in each section. Use the key on the next page to determine your executive skills strengths (two to three highest scores) and weaknesses (two to three lowest scores).

- | | | | | | | |
|----------------|-------|---------------|---------|------------------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Strongly agree | Agree | Tend to agree | Neutral | Tend to disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |

<u>Item</u>	<u>Score</u>
1. I tend to jump to conclusions.	_____
2. I don't think before I speak.	_____
3. I take action without having all the facts.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	_____
4. I don't have a good memory for facts, dates, and details.	_____
5. I am not very good at remembering the things I have committed to do.	_____
6. I frequently need reminders to complete tasks.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	_____
7. My emotions often get in the way when performing on the job.	_____
8. Little things affect me emotionally or distract me from the task at hand.	_____
9. I have trouble deferring my personal feelings until after a task has been completed.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	_____
10. I get rattled when unexpected events occur.	_____
11. I don't easily adjust to changes in plans and priorities.	_____
12. I don't consider myself flexible and adaptive to change.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	_____
13. I don't find it easy to stay focused on my work.	_____
14. Once I start an assignment, I have trouble working diligently until it's completed.	_____
15. When interrupted, I find it difficult to get back and complete the job at hand.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	_____
16. No matter what the task, I have trouble getting started right away.	_____
17. Procrastination is often a problem for me.	_____
18. I often leave tasks to the last minute.	_____
TOTAL SCORE:	_____

(cont.)

Executive Skills Questionnaire for Parents (cont.)

19. When I plan out my day, I have trouble identifying priorities and sticking to them. _____
20. When I have a lot to do, I find it hard to focus on the most important things. _____
21. I typically don't break big tasks down into subtasks and timelines. _____
- TOTAL SCORE:** _____
22. I am not an organized person. _____
23. It is difficult for me to keep my work area neat and organized. _____
24. I am not good at maintaining systems for organizing my work. _____
- TOTAL SCORE:** _____
25. At the end of the day, I usually haven't finished what I set out to do. _____
26. I am not good at estimating how long it takes to do something. _____
27. I am not usually on time for appointments and activities. _____
- TOTAL SCORE:** _____
28. I don't think of myself as being driven to meet my goals. _____
29. I don't easily give up immediate pleasures to work on long-term goals. _____
30. I usually don't focus on setting goals and achieving high levels of performance. _____
- TOTAL SCORE:** _____
31. I don't routinely evaluate my performance and devise methods for personal improvement. _____
32. It is hard for me to step back from a situation to make objective decisions. _____
33. I don't "read" situations well and struggle to adjust my behavior based on the reactions of others. _____
- TOTAL SCORE:** _____

KEY					
<u>Items</u>	<u>Executive skill</u>	<u>Items</u>	<u>Executive skill</u>	<u>Items</u>	<u>Executive skill</u>
1-3	Response inhibition	13-15	Sustained attention	25-27	Time management
4-6	Working memory	16-18	Task initiation	28-30	Goal-directed persistence
7-9	Emotional control	19-21	Planning/prioritizing	31-33	Metacognition
10-12	Flexibility	22-24	Organization		

Your strongest skills (highest scores)

Your weakest skills (lowest scores)

For Parents: What's My Parenting Style?

Read the descriptions and decide which style best reflects the one you use *most of the time*. If you feel you fluctuate between different approaches, select more than one (but no more than three!) and rank-order them, with 1 representing the style you use the most and 3 the least.

Parenting style	Ranking (1-3)
Overinvolved, micromanaging	
Would like to help, but follow-through is inconsistent	
Avoid confrontations at all costs (I know I need to hold my teen accountable, but I can't bring myself to do it)	
Tough love (children need to learn from their mistakes)	
Parents boomerang between overly permissive and punitive	
Parents disagree with each other about how to manage problems	
Authoritative/democratic—involving the teen in decision making and problem solving but also imposing rules and consequences	

For Teens: What Parenting Style Do My Parents Use?

Read the descriptions and decide which style best reflects the one you think your parents use *most of the time*. If you feel they fluctuate between different approaches, then select more than one (but no more than three!) and rank-order them, with 1 representing the style you use the most and 3 the least.

Parenting style	Ranking (1-3)
Overinvolved, micromanaging	
Would like to help, but follow-through is inconsistent	
Avoid confrontations at all costs (I get away with a lot because they don't have or enforce rules)	
Tough love (children need to learn from their mistakes)	
Parents boomerang between overly permissive and punitive	
Parents disagree with each other about how to manage problems	
Authoritative/democratic—they involve me in decision making and problem solving but also impose rules and consequences	

How Well Does Your Teen Inhibit Impulses?

For each item in the chart, first decide whether the statement to the left or right of *BUT* describes your teen better. Then rate the degree to which that statement applies to your teen. The number of items for which you chose the right-hand statement is an indicator of how much improvement your teen may need in the skill overall. Your ratings indicate possible targets for skill building: Where you chose “pretty much” or “very much” for a left-hand statement, your teen is demonstrating good use of the skill in that particular domain. “Pretty much” or “very much” for right-hand statements indicates areas that may need the most work.

Just a little	Pretty much	Very much				Just a little	Pretty much	Very much
			Some kids think about what might happen before they act.	BUT	Other kids act without thinking.			
			Some kids keep quiet or raise their hand to speak in class.	BUT	Other kids get in trouble for talking too much in class.			
			Some kids think about the consequences before they do something.	BUT	Other kids just act. They don't waste time thinking about the consequences.			
			Some kids take their time before making up their mind.	BUT	Other kids just “go with their gut.”			
			Some kids think about how others will react when they say something.	BUT	Others kids say what's on their mind without worrying what effect it has on others.			
			Some kids are able to walk away from confrontation or provocation by a peer.	BUT	Other kids react immediately and challenge the peer.			
			Some kids can say no to a fun activity if other plans are already made.	BUT	Other kids go with the fun activity immediately in front of them.			

How Well Does Your Teen Use Working Memory?

For each item in the chart, first decide whether the statement to the left or right of *BUT* describes your teen better. Then rate the degree to which that statement applies to your teen. The number of items for which you chose the right-hand statement is an indicator of how much improvement your teen may need in the skill overall. Your ratings indicate possible targets for skill building: Where you chose “pretty much” or “very much” for a left-hand statement, your teen is demonstrating good use of the skill in that particular domain. “Pretty much” or “very much” for right-hand statements indicates areas that may need the most work.

Just a little	Pretty much	Very much				Just a little	Pretty much	Very much
			Some kids keep track of their belongings, like coats, keys, or sports equipment.	BUT	Other kids forget where they've left stuff and misplace things a lot.			
			Some kids are really good at remembering what they have to do.	BUT	Other kids say, "I'll do it later" but then forget about it.			
			Some kids have good ways to remember important things (e.g., lists, reminder notes).	BUT	Other kids tell themselves, "I'm sure I'll remember," but then they don't.			
			Some kids can focus on <i>right now</i> but still remember other things they need to do.	BUT	Other kids get wrapped up in what they are doing and forget other obligations.			
			Some kids know exactly what they need and make sure they bring it home from school.	BUT	Other kids forget what they have for homework or forget to bring home the stuff they need to do it.			
			Some kids seem to learn from past experience.	BUT	Others seem to keep making the same mistakes in spite of past consequences.			

How Well Does Your Teen Regulate Emotions?

For each item in the chart, first decide whether the statement to the left or right of *BUT* describes your teen better. Then rate the degree to which that statement applies to your teen. The number of items for which you chose the right-hand statement is an indicator of how much improvement your teen may need in the skill overall. Your ratings indicate possible targets for skill building: Where you chose “pretty much” or “very much” for a left-hand statement, your teen is demonstrating good use of the skill in that particular domain. “Pretty much” or “very much” for right-hand statements indicates areas that may need the most work.

Just a little	Pretty much	Very much				Just a little	Pretty much	Very much
			Some kids stay positive even when homework is difficult or time-consuming.	BUT	Other kids get annoyed when homework is hard or confusing or takes a long time to finish.			
			Some kids can stay cool no matter what the irritation.	BUT	Other kids have a short fuse and get easily frustrated by even little things.			
			Some kids take unexpected events in stride.	BUT	Other kids get stressed out if something does not go right.			
			Some kids just let things “roll off their backs.”	BUT	Other kids get hurt or aggravated easily if someone criticizes them.			
			Some kids control their temper easily.	BUT	Other kids scream or “lose it” when they get angry.			

How Flexible Is Your Teen?

For each item in the chart, first decide whether the statement to the left or right of *BUT* describes your teen better. Then rate the degree to which that statement applies to your teen. The number of items for which you chose the right-hand statement is an indicator of how much improvement your teen may need in the skill overall. Your ratings indicate possible targets for skill building: Where you chose “pretty much” or “very much” for a left-hand statement, your teen is demonstrating good use of the skill in that particular domain. “Pretty much” or “very much” for right-hand statements indicates areas that may need the most work.

Just a little	Pretty much	Very much				Just a little	Pretty much	Very much
			Some kids like the challenge of open-ended homework assignments, like writing and projects.	BUT	Other kids would rather do homework that has one right answer.			
			Some kids seem to have a Plan B to fall back on if their first idea doesn't work.	BUT	Other kids have trouble thinking of more than one solution to a problem.			
			Some kids “go with the flow” and easily adjust to changes in plans.	BUT	Other kids are thrown for a loop when an unexpected change happens.			
			Some kids can naturally “think on their feet.”	BUT	Other kids need to prepare in advance.			
			Some kids can “make things up as they go along.”	BUT	Other kids need to plan out in their head how something will go in advance and get upset if it doesn't happen as planned.			

How Well Can Your Teen Sustain Attention?

For each item in the chart, first decide whether the statement to the left or right of *BUT* describes your teen better. Then rate the degree to which that statement applies to your teen. The number of items for which you chose the right-hand statement is an indicator of how much improvement your teen may need in the skill overall. Your ratings indicate possible targets for skill building: Where you chose “pretty much” or “very much” for a left-hand statement, your teen is demonstrating good use of the skill in that particular domain. “Pretty much” or “very much” for right-hand statements indicates areas that may need the most work.

Just a little	Pretty much	Very much				Just a little	Pretty much	Very much
			Some kids have no trouble paying attention in class, even when the teacher is boring.	BUT	Other kids lose focus in class a lot and start thinking about other things.			
			Some kids stick with their homework until it is done.	BUT	Other kids run out of steam with homework that takes a long time.			
			Some kids complete chores without having to be hassled by their parents.	BUT	Other kids start chores but don't finish them unless someone is on their case.			
			Some kids can finish projects even if they take a while.	BUT	Other kids start projects and never seem to finish them.			
			Some kids stick with things even if they get interrupted.	BUT	Other kids have trouble getting back on track if something draws them off task.			

How Well Does Your Teen Initiate Nonpreferred Tasks?

For each item in the chart, first decide whether the statement to the left or right of *BUT* describes your teen better. Then rate the degree to which that statement applies to your teen. The number of items for which you chose the right-hand statement is an indicator of how much improvement your teen may need in the skill overall. Your ratings indicate possible targets for skill building: Where you chose “pretty much” or “very much” for a left-hand statement, your teen is demonstrating good use of the skill in that particular domain. “Pretty much” or “very much” for right-hand statements indicates areas that may need the most work.

Just a little	Pretty much	Very much				Just a little	Pretty much	Very much
			Some kids get started on homework right away.	BUT	Other kids put off homework as long as possible.			
			Some kids are good at making themselves set aside fun stuff to do homework or chores.	BUT	Other kids have a hard time pulling themselves away from fun things (video games, Facebook) to do work.			
			Some kids make a point of getting a quick start on long-term assignments.	BUT	Other kids wait until the last minute to start these assignments.			
			Some kids, if they decide they want something, start making plans right away for getting it.	BUT	Other kids spend a lot of time thinking about something they want, but never actually get started on the work needed.			
			Some kids are “go to” people when anybody wants something done.	BUT	Other kids aren’t likely to be asked by others to do things because they can’t be relied on to follow through.			

How Well Does Your Teen Use Planning/Prioritizing Skills?

For each item in the chart, first decide whether the statement to the left or right of *BUT* describes your teen better. Then rate the degree to which that statement applies to your teen. The number of items for which you chose the right-hand statement is an indicator of how much improvement your teen may need in the skill overall. Your ratings indicate possible targets for skill building: Where you chose “pretty much” or “very much” for a left-hand statement, your teen is demonstrating good use of the skill in that particular domain. “Pretty much” or “very much” for right-hand statements indicates areas that may need the most work.

Just a little	Pretty much	Very much				Just a little	Pretty much	Very much
			Some kids are great at figuring out the steps needed to do a project.	BUT	Other kids don't know where to start or how to make a plan.			
			Some kids know what's important or what needs to be done first.	BUT	Other kids have trouble prioritizing when they have a lot to do.			
			Some kids make a plan for the day either on paper or in their head.	BUT	Other kids let the day unfold and then realize afterward that there was stuff that didn't get done.			
			Some kids divide an assignment into pieces and stick to a timeline.	BUT	Other kids work on long-term projects in spurts without any real timeline.			
			Some kids are good at figuring out ways to save money for something they want.	BUT	Other kids want expensive things and don't know how to go about saving money for them.			

How Well Does Your Teen Use Organizational Skills?

For each item in the chart, first decide whether the statement to the left or right of *BUT* describes your teen better. Then rate the degree to which that statement applies to your teen. The number of items for which you chose the right-hand statement is an indicator of how much improvement your teen may need in the skill overall. Your ratings indicate possible targets for skill building: Where you chose “pretty much” or “very much” for a left-hand statement, your teen is demonstrating good use of the skill in that particular domain. “Pretty much” or “very much” for right-hand statements indicates areas that may need the most work.

Just a little	Pretty much	Very much		BUT		Just a little	Pretty much	Very much
			Some kids keep notebooks and backpacks organized to find things easily.	BUT	Other kids can't find things in their notebooks or backpacks because they're a mess.			
			Some kids are naturals at keeping their bedrooms neat.	BUT	Other kids seem to never clean their bedrooms unless someone forces them to.			
			Some kids make sure that their desks are cleared off before they start working.	BUT	Other kids work at desks that are piled high with clutter.			
			Some kids know exactly where to find important things (cell phones, keys, etc.).	BUT	Other kids lose or misplace important things a lot.			
			Some kids put their things in a specific place as soon as they are finished using them.	BUT	Other kids leave their belongings all over the house (or even at other people's houses!).			

How Well Does Your Teen Manage Time?

For each item in the chart, first decide whether the statement to the left or right of *BUT* describes your teen better. Then rate the degree to which that statement applies to your teen. The number of items for which you chose the right-hand statement is an indicator of how much improvement your teen may need in the skill overall. Your ratings indicate possible targets for skill building: Where you chose “pretty much” or “very much” for a left-hand statement, your teen is demonstrating good use of the skill in that particular domain. “Pretty much” or “very much” for right-hand statements indicates areas that may need the most work.

Just a little	Pretty much	Very much				Just a little	Pretty much	Very much
			Some teens are always on time for school, dates, appointments, or other activities.	BUT	Other kids are chronically late.			
			Some kids are great at estimating how much time is needed to do something or go someplace.	BUT	Other kids have no idea how long it takes to do tasks or get from one place to another.			
			Some kids finish their homework or chores on time.	BUT	Other kids seem to routinely run out of time for things they need to do.			
			Some kids routinely accomplish the tasks they set out to do each day.	BUT	Other kids have difficulty doing everything they plan on getting done each day.			
			Some kids can adjust their pace to fit the time they have to finish something.	BUT	Other kids seem to work at one speed no matter how much time they will need to complete the task.			

How Well Does Your Teen Persist toward a Goal?

For each item in the chart, first decide whether the statement to the left or right of *BUT* describes your teen better. Then rate the degree to which that statement applies to your teen. The number of items for which you chose the right-hand statement is an indicator of how much improvement your teen may need in the skill overall. Your ratings indicate possible targets for skill building: Where you chose “pretty much” or “very much” for a left-hand statement, your teen is demonstrating good use of the skill in that particular domain. “Pretty much” or “very much” for right-hand statements indicates areas that may need the most work.

Just a little	Pretty much	Very much		BUT		Just a little	Pretty much	Very much
			Some kids have one eye on the future and how best to get there.		Other kids prefer to take one day at a time.			
			Some kids are willing to set aside fun stuff to achieve long-term goals.		Other kids live by the motto “You’re only young once.”			
			Some kids know what they want to do when they grow up and have a plan for getting there.		Other kids don’t think about life after high school or college but assume they will know what they want to do “when the time comes.”			
			Some kids set goals and don’t let anything stop them from reaching their goals.		Other kids see what is happening right now as more important than what is down the road.			
			Some kids don’t let obstacles stand in the way of getting what they want.		Other kids give up working toward a goal if something blocks them.			

How Well Does Your Teen Use Metacognitive Skills?

For each item in the chart, first decide whether the statement to the left or right of *BUT* describes your teen better. Then rate the degree to which that statement applies to your teen. The number of items for which you chose the right-hand statement is an indicator of how much improvement your teen may need in the skill overall. Your ratings indicate possible targets for skill building: Where you chose “pretty much” or “very much” for a left-hand statement, your teen is demonstrating good use of the skill in that particular domain. “Pretty much” or “very much” for right-hand statements indicates areas that may need the most work.

Just a little	Pretty much	Very much				Just a little	Pretty much	Very much
			Some kids are good at stepping back and seeing the “whole picture.”	BUT	Other kids get lost in details and miss this big picture.			
			Some kids are good at sensing how others are reacting to their behavior or ideas.	BUT	Other kids focus more on getting their point across and may not pick up on feedback from others.			
			Some kids try to figure out what went wrong so they can do better the next time.	BUT	Other kids put their mistakes behind them and hope they do not happen again.			
			Some kids can come up with several different ways to study.	BUT	Other kids have only one way to study, and it does not always work.			
			Some kids ask for feedback from teachers or coaches to help them improve performance.	BUT	Other kids don’t even think about asking for feedback and just assume they know what they are doing.			

An Overview of the Coaching Process

The coaching model has been designed to help teenagers be more successful in school and reach the career goals they set for themselves. The model has two phases: In Phase 1, the coach works with the student to develop a specific and realistic set of long-range goals and a plan for meeting those goals. In Phase 2, the coach works with the student on a regular basis to help the student plan his or her time, organize assignments, break down tasks, develop effective study skills, and, above all, to act as a supporter and advocate. A brief description of this process follows.

PHASE 1: LONG-TERM GOAL SETTING

Long-term goal setting with secondary-level students includes setting goals with respect to both high school graduation and post-high-school plans. If these plans include college, the coach works with the student to identify what kind of college the student hopes to attend (for example, 2-year, 4-year, state university, liberal arts college). If the student wants to attend a particular college, this is included as part of the goal. The steps in Phase 1 are as follows:

- *Step 1:* The coach asks the student to describe his or her long-term goals and, if needed, helps the student refine them by asking clarifying questions: Do you plan to graduate from high school? Are you taking college, general, or vocational track classes? What do you hope to do after you finish high school—for example, continue with further schooling or job training or get a job, and if so, what type of job would you hope to get?
- *Step 2:* Working with one goal at a time, the coach and the student determine what steps the student needs to take to achieve that goal. This may be as simple as getting passing grades in all classes, or it may be more complicated. If the student is applying to a competitive college, for instance, goals may include making the honor roll, enrolling in honors-level or AP classes, participating in extracurricular activities, and the coach may need to discuss with the student the need to sign up for the kinds of classes required by the college that he or she is interested in.
- *Step 3:* The coach and the student discuss what obstacles will need to be overcome to achieve a particular goal. Many of these obstacles may involve specific behaviors such as choosing to do more interesting things

(cont.)

An Overview of the Coaching Process (*cont.*)

than homework, leaving assignments to the last minute with a resulting loss of quality, skipping classes, or forgetting to hand in homework.

- *Step 4:* The coach and the student discuss how the student can work to overcome the obstacles that he or she has identified. For instance, if leaving things until the last minute is an obstacle, the student might decide that making and following a timeline for a long-term project could help. If forgetting homework is a problem, developing a cuing system to help remember homework might address this obstacle. The coach and the student work together to identify one or two strategies to address each obstacle.
- *Step 5:* At this point, the coach and the student work together to help the student identify what environmental supports or modifications need to be put in place to enhance the likelihood of success. This might include test-taking modifications, such as extended time limits or taking tests in a quiet room, access to tutorial services for weak subject areas, a daily or weekly homework monitoring system to help the student stay current with assignments, assistance with time management or organizational skills, or a homework incentive system.
- *Step 6:* The last step in the session is for the coach to check with the student one last time to ensure that the plan being developed is realistic and within the capabilities of the student to achieve. Although plans can be revised as necessary as coaching continues, every effort should be made to develop a plan at the outset that has a reasonable chance of success.

PHASE 2: DAILY COACHING SESSIONS

The purpose of the daily coaching session is primarily for the coach to help the student plan what tasks he or she has to accomplish before the next coaching session and to identify when the task will be completed. With the exception of the very first daily session, each session follows the same format by using the acronym REAP (Review, Evaluate, Anticipate, Plan).

In the first session the coach and student *Review* the results of the long-range goal-setting session. The coach may begin with a question such as “What was it we talked about when we met before?” or “Tell me what you remember about the goals you set at our last meeting.” Although notes from the long-range goal-setting session can be referred to, the student begins by answering this question based on his or her recollection of that meeting. The session then moves toward a discussion of immediate tasks and

(*cont.*)

An Overview of the Coaching Process (*cont.*)

responsibilities, beginning with an overview of whatever longer-term obligations the student might have, including schoolwork as well as extracurricular responsibilities (sports activities, jobs, clubs, etc.).

The coach then asks the student to identify what the student hopes to accomplish before the next coaching session. This is written down (by the coach) and includes all academic tasks, both homework due the next day and long-term projects that need to be started or upcoming tests and quizzes that need to be studied for. Here the coach and the student may work together on developing timelines and setting reasonable study goals for tests. The student may also want to work on behavioral goals (for example, “answer more questions in Spanish class” or “stay after school for extra help in biology”). Once specific tasks are identified, the coach has the student say when he or she plans to do each task. The coach gets the student to be as specific as possible about when the task will be accomplished (for example, “during eighth-period study hall” or “between 7:00 and 8:00 P.M. this evening”). The meeting concludes with a brief assessment of how the session went. Both the coach and the student have a copy of the written plan to take away from the session.

All subsequent sessions begin with a review of the tasks identified at the previous coaching session to determine whether the plans were carried out as intended. Referring to the plan completed at the previous session, the coach reads each item on the list and asks if the student did the task. The student is then asked to rate (*Evaluate*) how well he or she accomplished the task, perhaps using a rating scale. This is followed by a brief discussion between the coach and the student about the goals set and the student’s performance.

The next step is to have the student *Anticipate* work that he or she has to do in the near future. Now a new plan is developed. This may mean transferring relevant information from the previous plan and adding in the new assignments, tests, or responsibilities that may have come up since the previous session. The final step, as in the first session, is for the coach and student to work together to *Plan* what will be done before the next coaching session.

Particularly in the early stages of the coaching process, the emphasis by the coach is on support. If the coach notes that the student frequently fails to follow through on the plans he or she has devised, they work together to evaluate where the plans are breaking down, but the coach also may want to help the student revise the plan or long-term goal to make it more realistic and achievable. As time goes on and the student and coach become more comfortable working with each other, the coach may be more direct in challenging the student to accomplish daily tasks.
