

## Executive Function Skills Supported Through Restorative Practices

The prefrontal cortex of the brain, which handles many executive function skills, does not fully develop until the age of approximately 25 years old. In the table below, the sample questions for addressing executive function through restorative practice are intended to strengthen the referenced executive function skills, address the importance of those skills for mitigating behavioral issues, and leverage those skills to promote reflection, conflict resolution, relationship building, and more.

Executive Function Skill	Importance in Behavioral Issues	Addressing It Through RP
Shifting focus from one event to another	Student may stay stuck in frustration or conflict, unable to move on.	“What can you do to put this behind you and refocus on what’s next?”
Thinking before acting	Student may blurt out, hit, or disrupt without pausing.	“What could you do differently next time before reacting right away?”
Managing conflicting thoughts	Student may get overwhelmed or act out when pulled in two directions.	“What’s the most important thought to focus on right now?”
Identifying cause-and-effect relationships	Student may not connect their actions to outcomes (e.g., disruption → missed work).	“How did your action affect others? What happened as a result?”
Changing perspective	Student may insist they’re right and resist seeing alternatives.	“If you were in your classmate’s shoes, how might you see this differently?”
Seeing multiple sides to a situation	Student may assume only one “truth” and escalate conflict.	“What do you think your teacher’s side of this story is?”
Being open to others’ points of view	Student may dismiss peers/teachers, fueling disrespect.	“What’s one thing you heard from others that surprised you?”
Maintaining social appropriateness	Student may make rude comments, ignore norms, or behave disruptively.	“What would be a more respectful way to say that?”
Overcoming temptation	Student may act on impulse (phone use, side comments, inappropriate behavior).	“What strategy could help you resist that urge next time?”
Catching & correcting errors	Student may repeat mistakes without noticing or repairing.	“When you realized it wasn’t working, what could you have done to fix it?”

Setting goals	Student may act aimlessly without direction, leading to disengagement.	“What’s a goal for how you’d like to handle situations like this in the future?”
Monitoring performance	Student may not notice when behavior is off-track.	“How can you tell if you’re staying on track during class?”
Working toward a goal	Student may give up quickly, resorting to off-task behavior.	“What’s the next small step you can take toward your goal?”
Reflecting on goals	Student may not connect behavior today with longer-term aspirations.	“How did your choices today move you closer to—or further from—your goal?”
Considering future consequences in light of current action	Student may prioritize short-term fun over long-term success.	“If you do this again, what might happen tomorrow? Next week?”
Applying former approaches to new situations	Student may not transfer lessons learned, repeating mistakes.	“Have you faced something like this before? What worked then?”
Anticipating	Student may be caught off-guard and react poorly.	“What could you do to prepare if this situation comes up again?”
Creating mental images	Student may struggle to envision positive alternatives.	“Can you picture what it would look like if you handled this well?”
Generating possible solutions	Student may see only one way out (often negative).	“What are three different ways you could respond next time?”
Predicting outcomes	Student may not foresee that an action leads to conflict.	“If you choose option A, what do you think will happen? Option B?”