

Institute for
Child and Family
Well-Being



Executive Functioning for Child and Family Well-being

John Till, The Family Partnership

Jennifer Winkler, Children's Wisconsin

Luke Waldo, Institute for Child and Family Well-being

Goals

- Learn about executive function and self-regulation skills
 - What they are and why they're important
- Share the Executive Functioning Across Generations[©] model
 - Design & results
 - Virtual home visiting adaptations
- Share the Mobility Mentoring model
 - Design & results
 - Child welfare adaptations
- Lessons Learned

Our Presenters



John Till



Luke Waldo



Jennifer Winkler

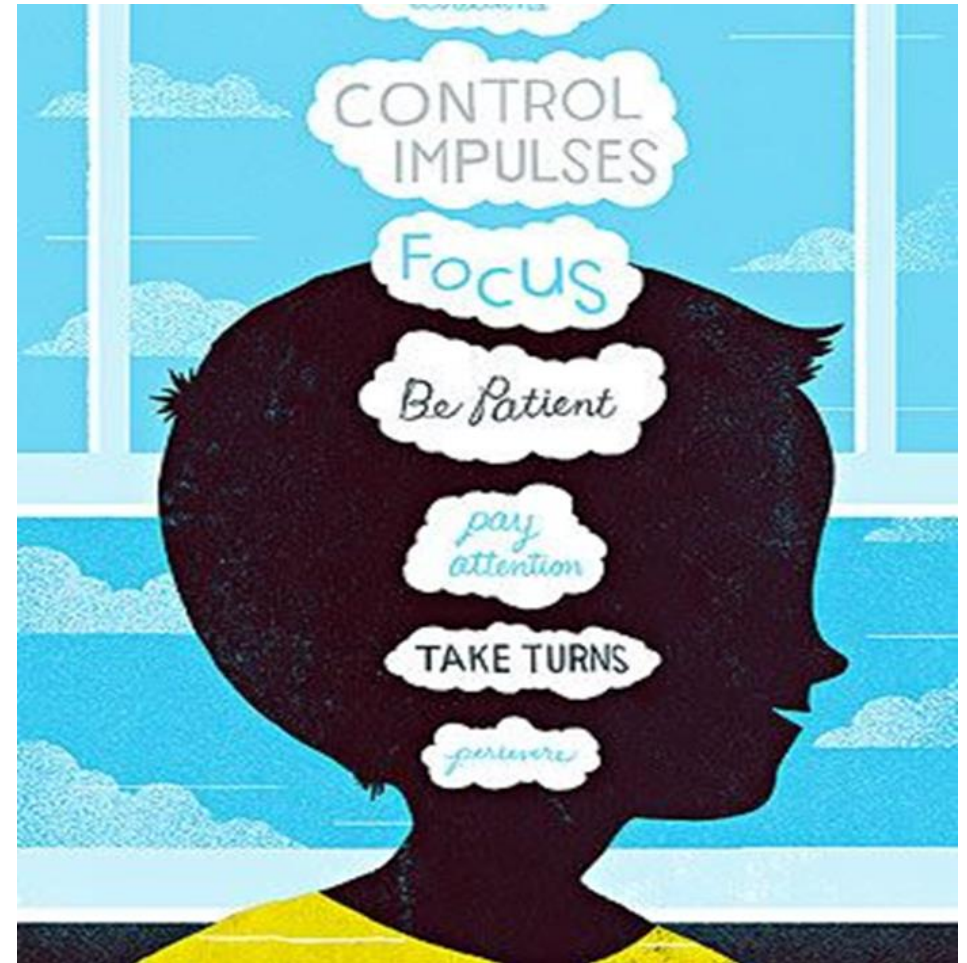
What is Executive Functioning?

Why is it important for child and family well-being?

Executive Functioning

Refers to coordination of multiple types and streams of information in order to arrive at the more effective course of action, including prioritizing tasks, goals, and information. Executive functioning is a skill developed through practice, using age appropriate experiences.

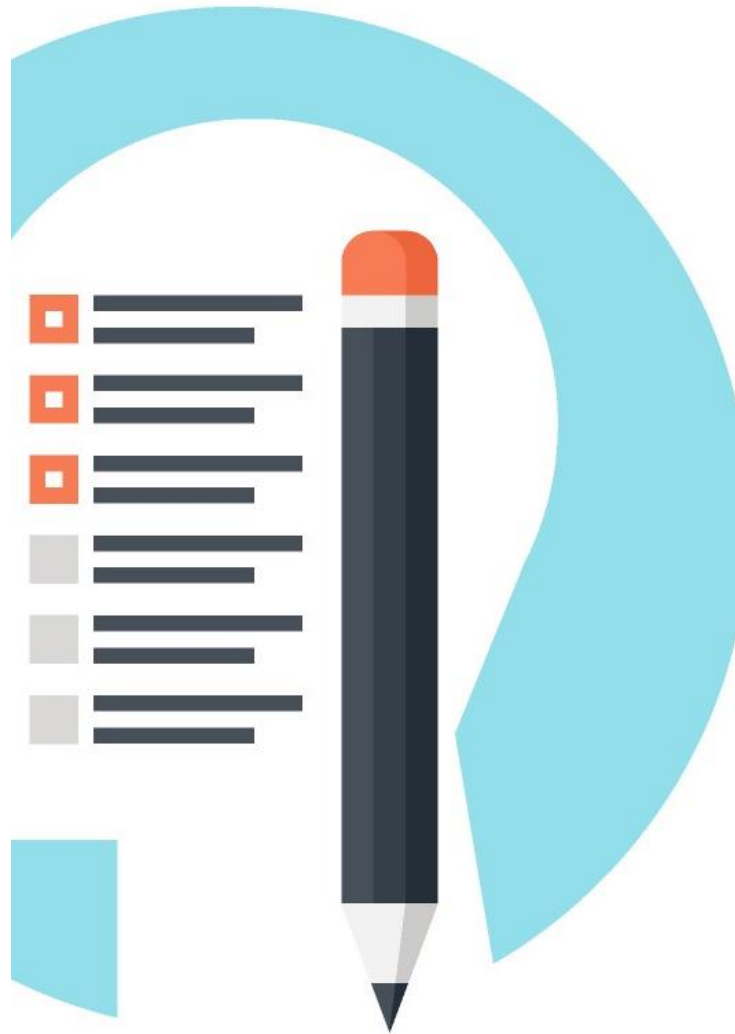
- **Working memory:** The capacity to hold and manipulate information in our heads over short periods of time
- **Mental flexibility:** The ability to adjust to changed demands, priorities, or perspectives
- **Inhibitory control:** The ability to resist impulsive behavior



Executive Function/Self-Regulation Skills

- Harvard Center on the Developing Child calls EF/SR Skills “Core Capabilities for Life”
- Key skills needed to:
 - Learn how to learn, succeed in school
 - Make and keep friends
 - Develop healthy relationships
 - Make healthy choices
 - Get a job, keep a job
 - Nurture healthy children





Adult Core Capabilities

Adults need a certain set of skills to get and keep a job, care for children, manage finances, and contribute productively to a community. We must be able to focus, plan ahead, avoid distractions, and shift our behavior. Adult Core Capabilities support being able to manage these tasks:

- Attention
- Self Regulation
- Executive Functioning
 - Working Memory
 - Inhibitory Control
 - Mental Flexibility

Attention

Attention is the critical gatekeeper that's needed to effectively self-regulate. We need to be able to direct our attention toward specific things within and around us and monitor what is happening with them. Attention includes that **moment-by-moment awareness of thoughts, feelings, behavior, performance, and progress toward a goal**, as well as your surroundings and context, such as others' behavior and how it may influence you.



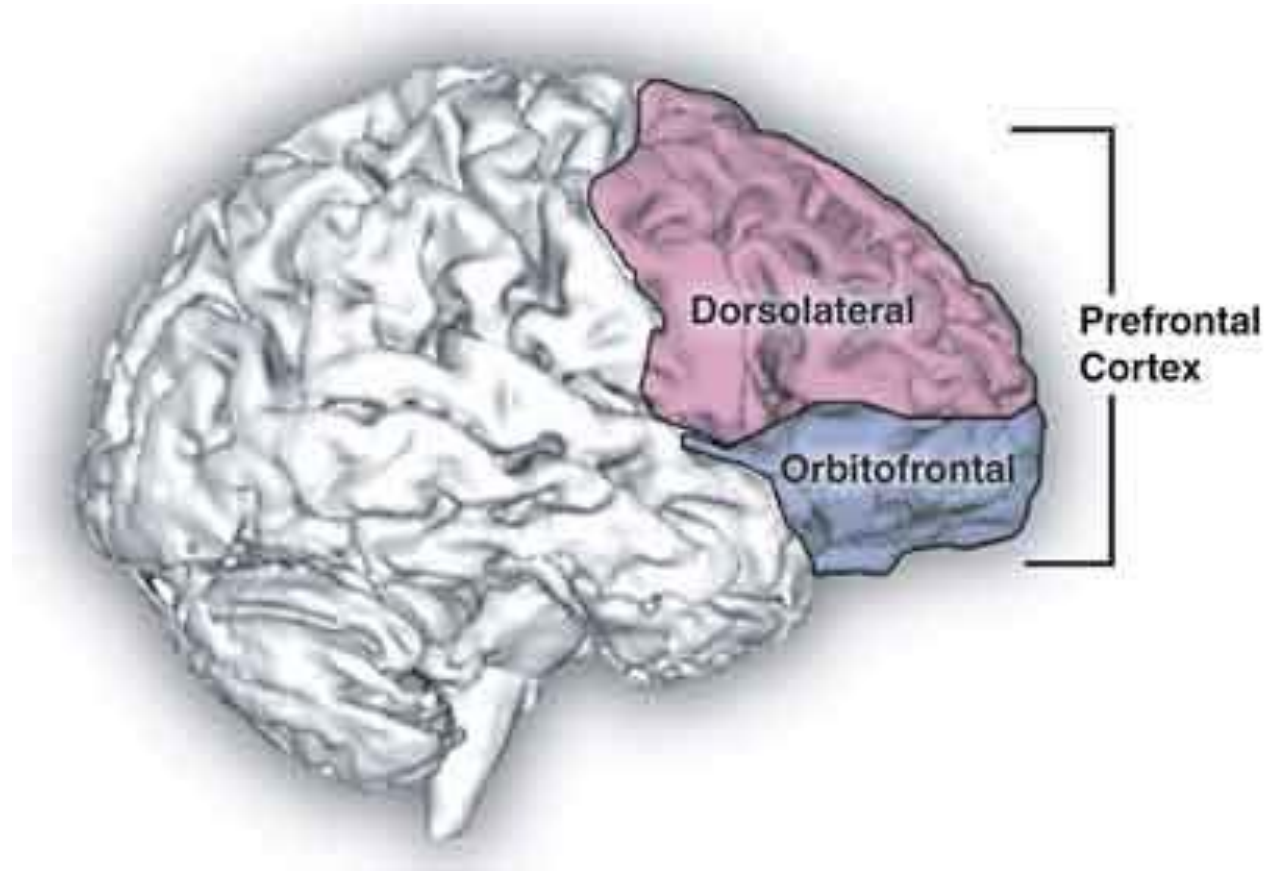


Self Regulation

Self-Regulation is a set of capabilities that help us to draw upon the right capabilities at the right time, manage our response to the world, and resist inappropriate responses. There are two types of processes:

- **Intentional** self-regulation is a conscious effort to set and stick to a plan and inhibit counterproductive or distracting response to situations. This is sometimes thought of as goal directed behavior.
- **Automatic** processes are fast, non-conscious management of response to the environment. This is thought of as impulsive behavior, or fight, flight, or freeze responses.

Where is self-regulation located in the brain?



Executive Function Is Language-Based

- Importance of Internal State Words for EF
 - Perception
 - Physiology
 - Volition/ability
 - Emotion/affect
 - Cognition/Mental state
 - Obligation/moral judgment
- Ability to connect the ISWs to Personal Narratives

Personal Narratives

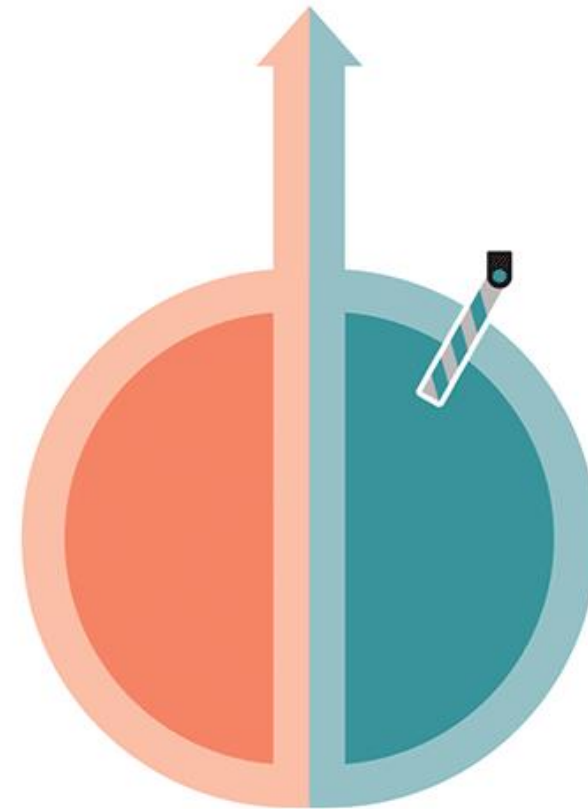
- Stories that we tell about ourselves and our experiences.
- First narratives to develop.
- Important to the development of self awareness and executive functioning.
- Link external events with our feelings, thoughts, and reactions through the use of internal state words.



ACEs, stress, & Executive Functioning

Stress makes it harder for people to optimize the decision-making and behavior management skills most needed to fully engage and persist in programs that might help them.

- Poverty
- Needing to juggle too much
- Too few resources
- Too few opportunities to get out of poverty
- Persistent social bias (both class-based bias and racism)
- Trauma
- Community violence
- Violence in the home
- Housing instability or homelessness
- Lack of income or education
- Etc.



Can the COVID-19 Pandemic Undermine EF?

Family Strengths

- Strong relationship between income and family strengths
- Families tend to rally in crises
 - Death of a family member
 - Family member with a serious health concern
- Chronic household stressors:
 - Conflict between adults and children
 - Household tasks left undone
 - Children not completing assigned chores

COVID-19 and Toxic Stress

- Increased economic stressors on households
- Prolonged uncertainty
- Sudden, new household responsibilities (e.g., remote learning)
- Isolation and confinement without breaks
- Fear, prolonged illnesses, a feeling of encirclement and impending doom



How have you designed and implemented Executive Functioning programming into your work?

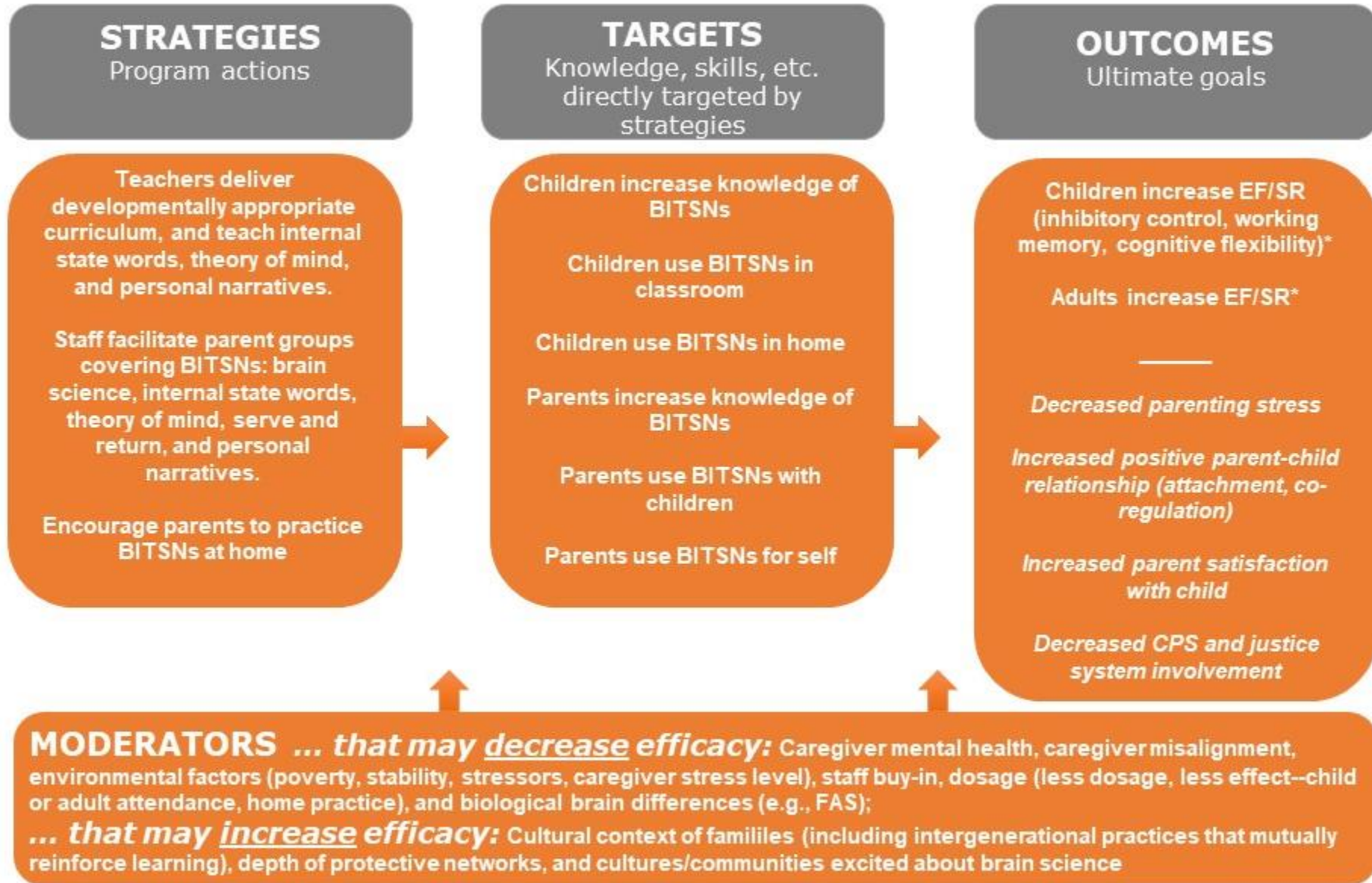
Model Description – Core Model Strategies

Executive Functioning Across Generations© is a two-generation (2Gen) intervention designed to boost executive functioning with children and parents

- **Children’s Curriculum (3-5 year olds)**
 - Daily delivery in groups of 5 children, 26 lessons
 - 6-8 weeks for delivery, 45 minutes per day
 - Focus on acquisition of Internal State Words and development of Personal Narratives
 - Books, songs, activities
- **Parents’ Curriculum**
 - Group delivery, 3 sessions, about 2 hours with breaks and food
 - Help parents learn practical brain science
 - Focus on recognizing and supporting children’s acquisition and use of Internal State Words and development of Personal Narratives
 - Curriculum familiarizes parents with types of activities used with children



Executive Functioning Across Generations – The Family Partnership



**Outcomes with existing measures*

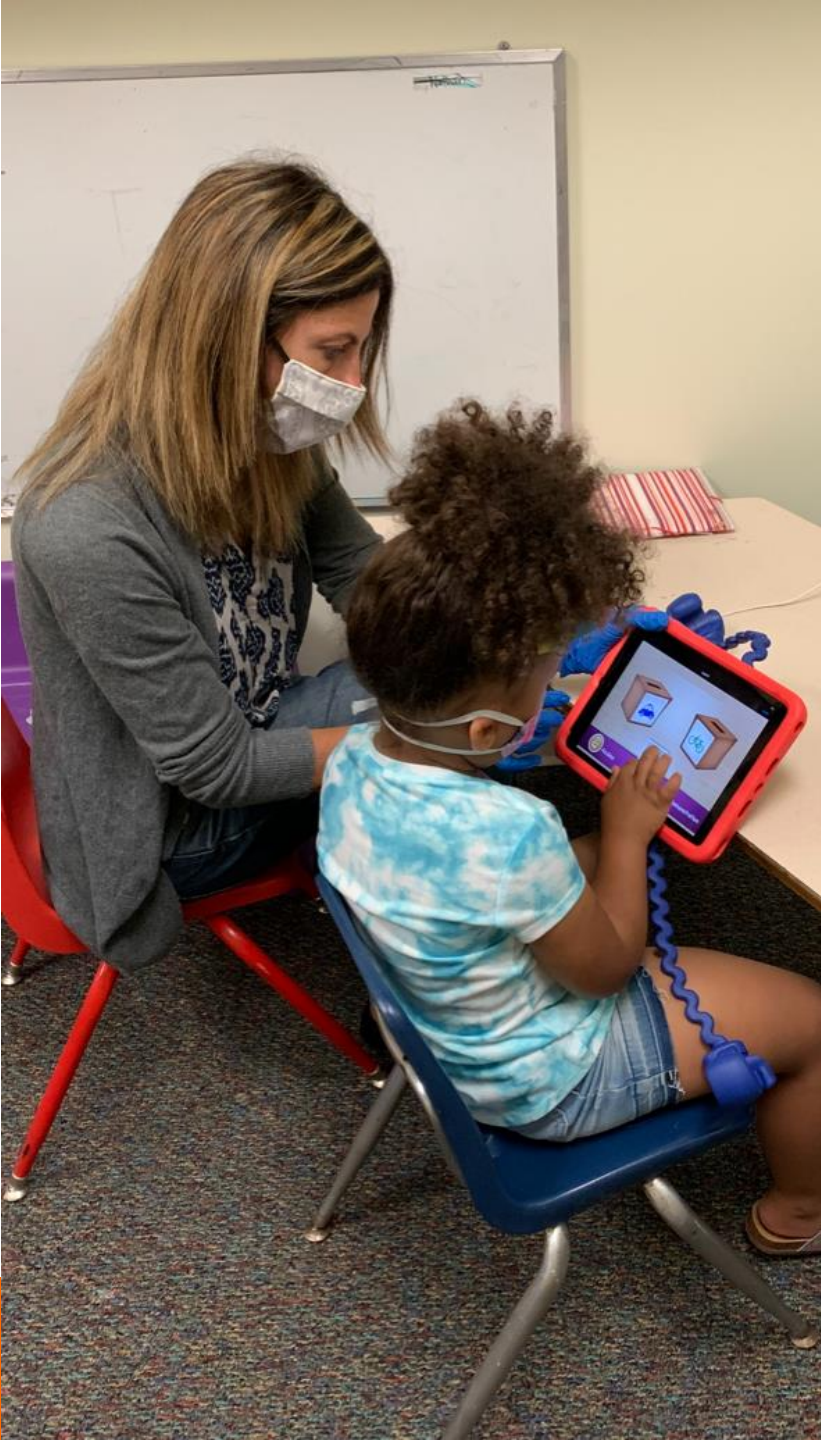
New Evaluation Tool: MEFS

Minnesota Executive Function Scale (MEFS)

- Developed by Reflection Science at University of Minnesota; Stephanie Carlson, Ph.D. and Phil Zelazo, Ph.D.
- Tablet-based app
- 5 minutes to take
- No minimum interval before reuse
- Only early learning readiness assessment usable with children as young as two years old
- Base pricing \$10/child/year, but as low as \$5/child/year with volume



How It Works



Virtual Home Visiting Adaptation - Why Do This?

- EF is a core capability for life – *caregiver needs to stay on track with goals, get a job, keep a job, keep cool, be flexible, provide consistent parenting*
- Understanding EF as an enhancement of what home visiting already offers
- EF helps counteract ACEs and build resiliency
- We frame it as a BOOST for the parent and potentially for the child
- Something for “older” kids in the household, ages 3-5



Virtual Home Visiting Adaptation

- National partners: Nebraska Children’s Home Society, Children’s Wisconsin, HCDC-FOI, Children’s Home Society of America
- TFP owns the design; Chris Wing is our curriculum developer
- Pilot exclusively with HFA sites in Fall 2020
- Feasibility Study
 - Can the intervention be implemented?
 - Is it acceptable to clients?
- “Start Small and Learn” Philosophy: Fast Cycle Evaluation; Amy Susman-Stillman of Future Services Institute is our evaluator
- Additional statewide MN pilots planned for 2021 (no EBP requirement)



Family Support's HCD Journey

- Home Management wasn't working!
 - Too nebulous
 - Too much “resource giving” and not enough skill building
 - Ineffective training
- Started an Innovation Project Team and used HCD techniques to explore our problem and figure out a solution
 - EMPath's Mobility Mentoring





EMPath

Economic Mobility Pathways

Introduction

Mobility Mentoring® is the professional practice of partnering with clients so that they may acquire the resources, skills, and sustained behavior changes necessary to attain and preserve their economic independence. This innovative approach is integrated throughout EMPath services. This report shares the reach of Mobility Mentoring and its effects on the families and individuals engaging in this transformative practice at EMPath's program sites in Greater Boston.

About EMPath

Economic Mobility Pathways (EMPath) is a global leader in helping low-income people reach the middle class and beyond through its science-based approach to mentoring. The approach helps families achieve dramatic gains in income, housing, education, family life, and career. EMPath uses the approach in its direct service work to support families in Greater Boston and through its Economic Mobility Exchange™, a partnership with non-profits, governments, and human service providers nationally and across the globe.

22%

of participants not in school at entry enrolled in school in the past year

97%

of adults had at least one Bridge conversation with their mentor

74%

of participants increased their Bridge scores in FY20

80%

of participants without a bank account who opened one



84%

of participants without a budget who created one



85%

of participants without savings who started saving money



In FY20, we served

1,364 individuals

726 adults • 638 children • 627 families

35% of participants (adults + children) participated in more than one program during FY20

48% of households experienced homelessness during FY20

87% of the adults with children who are single

Where on the ladder from 0–10 do you feel you personally stand right now?



Average Annual Earned Income at Entry and Most Recent

Baseline

\$17,056.08

Most Recent

\$23,093.64

July 2018 – June 2019



July 2019 - Now

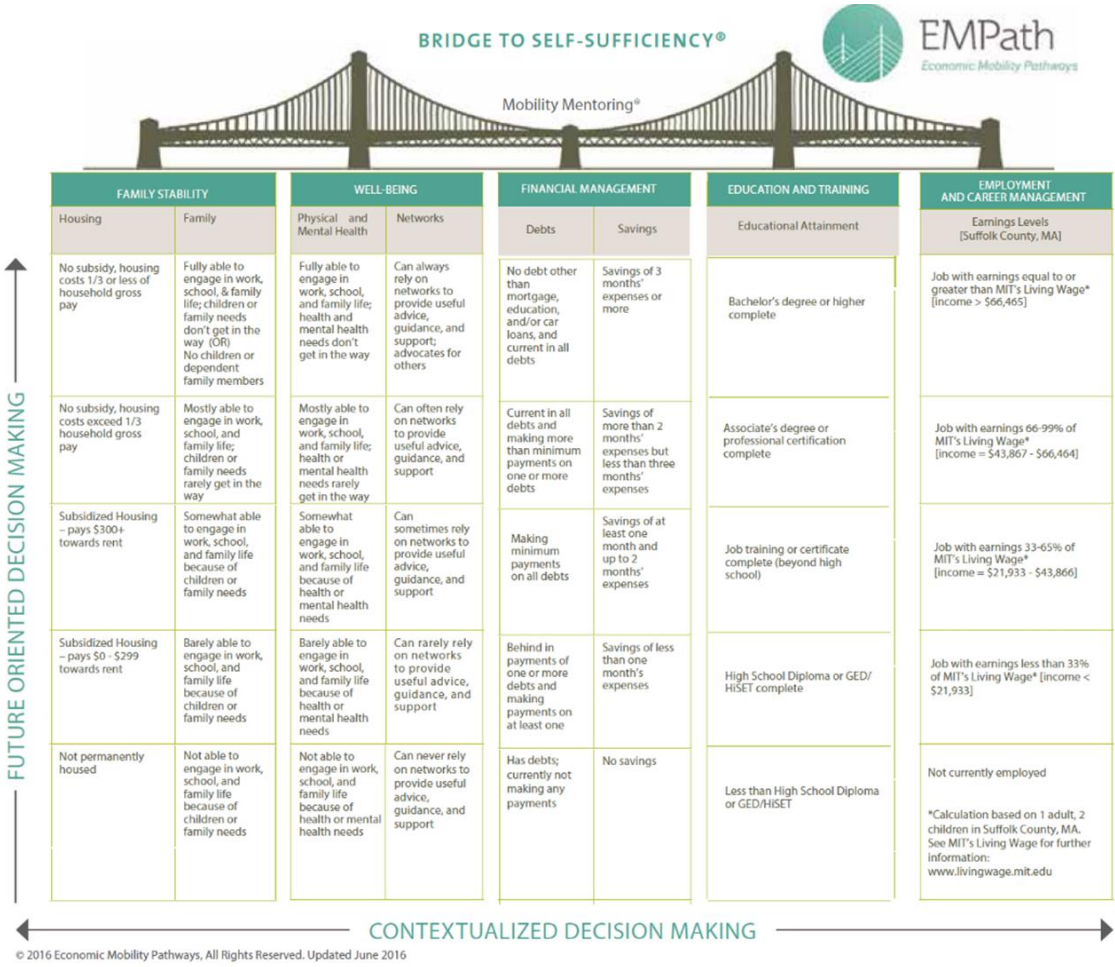


Our MM definition:

Mobility Mentoring is the professional practice of partnering with clients so that over time they may acquire the resources, skills, and sustained behavior changes necessary to attain and sustain family stability and independence.

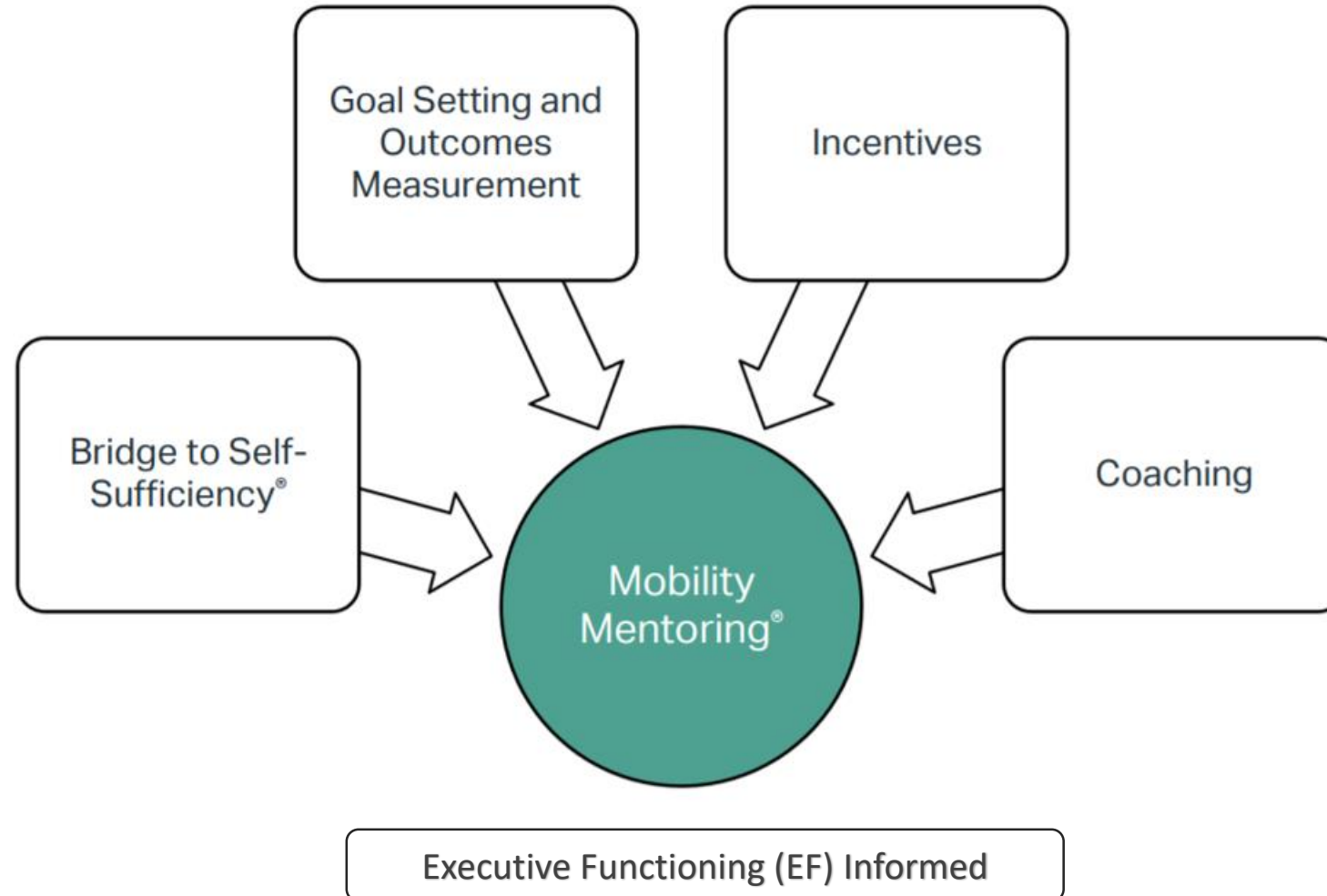
Mobility Mentoring

MM is based on the assumption that, if individuals can be engaged to optimize their outcomes in the critical areas of the Bridge, they are more likely to achieve stability and independence than if they tackle any one critical area alone.



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Mobility Mentoring[®]: Essential Elements



What lessons have you learned from the design and implementation of these Executive Functioning-informed models?

Lessons Learned from EF Across Generations

- Results of first three cycles of preschool pilots are promising!
- Frame EF skills as a Boost rather than as new label/remediation
- Staff receptiveness to Mind-Body Medicine informed approaches varies with culture and previous experience
- Parents are very interested in brain science and EF skills
- Social-emotional learning groups require shifts in classroom organization and scheduling
- Shift from delivery in preschool environment to home visiting shifts focus of intervention to parents
- Importance of creating communities of practice with staff to support implementation



THE BRIDGE TO FAMILY STABILITY



Thinking about the future

Parent-Child Interactions	Safety	Housing	Legal	Supports	Health	Expenses	Debts	Skills & Education
I ensure my child's safety and well-being at all times. I use my supports and I'm aware of and responsive to my child's needs without supervision.	I act as a safe and protective parent at all times.	I have stable and safe housing.	I have no pending or ongoing legal matters.	I can always rely on people I know to provide useful advice, guidance, or support; I am a networker and advocate.	I am fully engaged in my daily activities. My physical and/or emotional health is not a barrier to my activities and responsibilities.	I have enough income to cover my expenses, am not receiving assistance, and I am saving.	I am current on all balances and have no outstanding debt.	I use my strong workplace skills and education to enhance my career advancement and future goals.
I use my time with my child to ensure my child's safety and well-being. I use my supports and I'm aware of and responsive to my child's needs without supervision.	I am beginning to plan and demonstrate the skills to be a safe and protective parent.	I live in subsidized housing where I feel safe.	My legal matters rarely interfere with my work, school, or family life.	I can often rely on people I know to provide useful advice, guidance, or support; I have a developed network.	My physical and/or emotional health rarely interrupts my daily activities or responsibilities.	I have enough income to cover my expenses and am not receiving assistance.	I am current in payments and plans, and paying more than minimum payments.	I have strong workplace skills and/or education that enhance my employability.
I have awareness of my child's needs and use my time with my child to ensure my child's safety and well-being with some support and supervision.	I am learning about the safety threats for my family and the skills needed to be a safe and protective parent.	I have temporary or unreliable housing.	My legal matters sometimes interfere with my work, school, or family life.	I can sometimes rely on people I know to provide useful advice, guidance, or support; I have an emerging network.	My physical and/or emotional health sometimes interrupts my daily activities or responsibilities.	I have enough income to cover bills and other expenses and am receiving assistance.	I have structured payment plans in place and am meeting minimum payments.	I have workplace skills and/or education that help me maintain employability.
I have court ordered supervised parent-child interactions and/or I have started to demonstrate my ability to understand and meet my child's safety and well-being needs.	I am reflecting on the safety threats I or others have raised about my family; I am thinking of ways I can keep my family safe.	I have unsafe housing and/or I am at risk of eviction.	My legal matters often interfere with my work, school, or family life.	I can rarely rely on people I know to provide useful advice, guidance, or support; I have a limited network.	My physical and/or emotional health regularly interrupts my daily activities or responsibilities.	I do not have enough income to cover all of my bills and expenses.	I am behind on payments, debt is more than what my family can pay.	I have limited workplace skills and/or education that affect my employability, and would like to obtain new skills.
I have court ordered supervised parent-child interactions and/or I need support and supervision to ensure my child's safety and well-being needs are met.	I and/or others have concerns about the safety threats for my family has been exposed to.	I am homeless or am about to be evicted.	My legal matters regularly interfere with my work, school, or family life.	I can never rely on people I know to provide useful advice, guidance, or support; isolated, abusive, or draining network.	I have very limited engagement in my daily activities or responsibilities due to physical and/or emotional health.	I have no income and am unable to cover bills and expenses.	I am in default or have non-payments on all/most loans and accounts.	I do not have the workplace skills or education I need in order to obtain employment.



Kids deserve the best.

FAMILY SUPPORT GOAL ACTION WORKSHEET

SMART Criteria: Specific Measurable Attainable Relevant Time-bound

What do I want to accomplish? _____
_____ by: _____.

Why is this goal important to me? _____

On a scale of 1 to 10, how important is this goal to you?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all		Slightly		Somewhat		Very			

Bridge Pillar: PCI Safety Housing Legal Supports Health Expenses Debts Skills and Education

Type: Court-ordered goal -OR- Personal goal New Goal -OR- Revised Goal

Action Steps	Target Date	How can we celebrate?	How will we know this step is done?	Who can help with this step?	Done?
1.					<input type="checkbox"/>
2.					<input type="checkbox"/>
3.					<input type="checkbox"/>
4.					<input type="checkbox"/>
5.					<input type="checkbox"/>

How will we know this goal is done? _____ Recognition and/or Incentive: _____

On a scale of 1 to 10, how confident do you feel about achieving this goal?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all		Slightly		Somewhat		Very			

Participant Signature: _____ FSS Signature: _____ Date: _____

S.M.A.R.T GOALS



Specific: What EXACTLY do you want to achieve?



Measurable: How will you know when you've achieved it?



Achievable: Is it challenging but within your reach?



Relevant: How does it align with your job responsibilities?



Time-bound: When do you want to achieve it?

BUILDING STRONG EXECUTIVE-FUNCTIONING (EF) SKILLS:

- Meet basic needs first.
- Streamline & simplify.
- Break tasks down into manageable steps.
- Use accessible & familiar tools.
- Practice real-life situations.
- Be a coach, not a boss.
- Model organization and planning.
- Model consistency and reliability.
- Start with a Community Meeting.
- Reflect & build on successes.

Meet your Family Support Specialist



Hello! I'm Allie Tollaksen!

Family Support Specialist
 Children's Hospital of Wisconsin Community Services
 620 S. 76th Street Suite 120
 Milwaukee, WI 53214
 Office: 414-335-2332
 Fax: 414-453-2538

Children's Hospital of Wisconsin Community Services' Family Support Program's mission is to empower, support and advocate for families to achieve safety, stability and well-being while striving to bring and keep families together. To achieve our mission, Family Support Specialists partner with families involved in the Family Case Management and Intensive In-Home Services programs and provide an array of supportive, educational and safety interventions.

- Parent-Child Interactions
- Parenting Education
- In-Home Safety Control Services
- Goal Setting and Coaching

Meet your CHW Team

Family Case Manager:
 Phone:
 Email:

Family Case Management Supervisor:
 Phone:
 Email:

Family Support Supervisor:
 Phone:
 Email:

Additional Team Members:

Your Appointments:

Date	Time	Location	Session



Kids deserve the best.

Community Services - 76th

620 S. 76th Street
 Milwaukee, WI 53214



Children's Hospital of Wisconsin's 76th Street location houses a number of community services programs, including supervised visitation space, team meeting space, and the Robyn's Nest resource center.

MY SERVICES: _____



Kids deserve the best.

Community Services

620 S. 76th Street
 Milwaukee, WI 53214



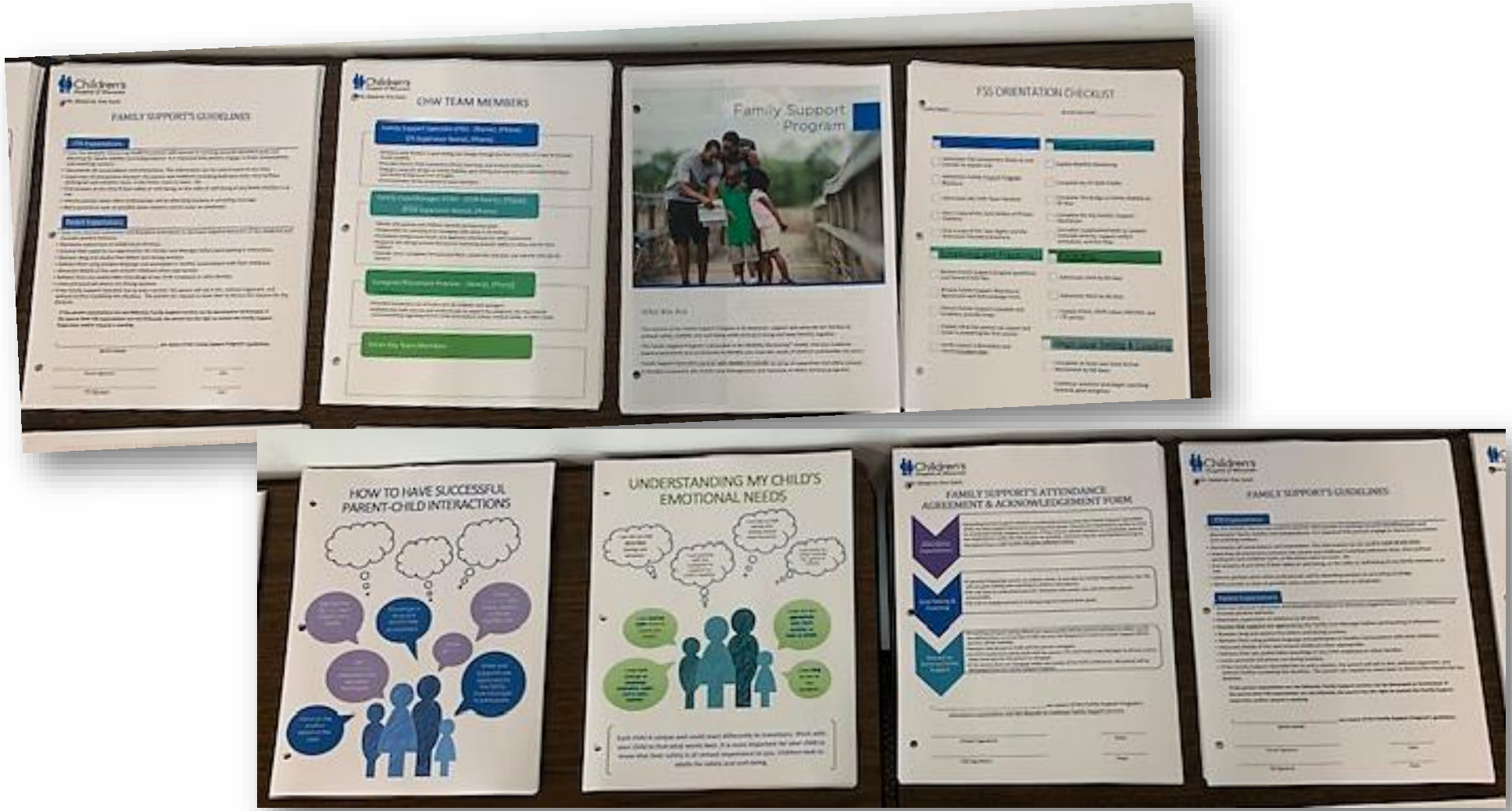
From South Side: 56 Bus (to 124th St. - Greenfield) exit at S. 76th and Greenfield

From North Side: 76 Bus (Southridge via 68) exit at S. 70th and Main

Community Services: 414-453-1400
 Child and Family Counseling: 414-453-2538



Kids deserve the best.





My Executive Skills Profile	Individual Statement Scores	Total Section Scores
A. Organization (Keeping Things in Order)	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
B. Time Management (Using Time Well)	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
C. Planning/Prioritization (Planning Ahead)	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
D. Response Inhibition (Think, Then Act)	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
E. Flexibility (Going with the Flow)	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
F. Emotional Control (Staying Cool)	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
G. Metacognition (Stepping Back)	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
H. Task Initiation (Getting Started)	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
I. Sustained Attention (Staying Attentive)	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
J. Goal-Directed Persistence (Sticking with It)	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
K. Stress Tolerance (Dealing with Stress)	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
L. Working Memory (Remembering)	1.	
	2.	
	3.	

Your Executive Skill Strengths
(Three highest scores)

Your Executive Skill Challenges
(Three lowest scores)



Questions?



Thank you!

We value your participation and feedback. Please complete the **brief survey** that you will receive upon the conclusion of this webinar.

We will follow shortly with **supportive materials** for further learning.

Upcoming ICFW Webinars

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Contact Luke Waldo: lwaldo@chw.org