

## EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING ACROSS GENERATIONS

# Our curriculum boosts brain power and calms classrooms.

### OVERVIEW

The Family Partnership designed Executive Functioning Across Generations to build executive function and self-regulation skills in preschool children ages 3 to 5.

**Executive function (EF) skills help young children learn how to learn, do well in school, make friends and keep friends, build healthy relationships, make healthy choices as they get older, get a job, keep a job, and eventually parent well. These skills include:**

- Working memory, or the ability to keep a goal or idea in mind in spite of distractions
- Impulse control
- Persistence

These skills develop most readily in children ages 3 to 5, and buffer children against the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and toxic stress at household and systemic levels.

The design of Executive Functioning Across Generations is centered on equity, and the curriculum has been piloted and evaluated from the start with African American, American Indian, and Latino/a children and families with low incomes in five states. Harvard Center on the Developing Child helped ensure a rigorous evaluation design to measure impact, and over the past 5 years, the program has shown a strong impact on the building blocks for EF skills.



## EF BUILDING BLOCKS

Executive Functioning Across Generations focuses on three building blocks of EF skills including:



### Language

Children learn and use internal state language to describe emotional and mental states.



### Storytelling

Through storytelling, children create context for positive and negative experiences so they can think about what to do next time.



### Mindfulness

Building mindfulness skills gives children the tools to "re-set" and focus during stressful situations.

**"A parent told us that when she feels stressed, her daughter reminds her to do belly breathing. It is great when what a child learns in the classroom transfers to the parent."**

John Everett Till, Senior Vice President of Strategy and Innovation

## PROVEN RESULTS

Evaluation conducted by the Center for Early Education and Development at the University of Minnesota has consistently shown that our intervention increases EF skills.

In a pre/post evaluation in a Texas Head Start in 2022, children demonstrated statistically significant increases in three measures of EF skills:

1. Use of internal state language, or words to describe thoughts, feelings and emotions. **Some children who were nonvocal also became more expressive over the course of the intervention.**
2. Ability to make sense and tell stories about emotionally significant experiences, including thinking about what children might do next time (for example, ask an adult for help).
3. **Significant improvements in EF-related classroom behaviors** including the ability to focus, impulse control, and persistence with tasks.

The Family Partnership is a 144-year-old Minneapolis nonprofit providing services and advocacy in early childhood, mental health, family home visiting, and anti-sex trafficking.

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