THINKING SKILLS REFERENCE SHEET

Language and Communication Skills
• Understands spoken directions
• Understands and follows conversations
• Expresses concerns, needs, or thoughts in words
• Is able to tell someone what’s bothering him or her

Attention and Working Memory Skills
• Stays with tasks requiring sustained attention
• Does things in a logical sequence or set order
• Keeps track of time; correctly assesses how much time a task will take
• Reflects on multiple thoughts or ideas at the same time
• Maintains focus during activities
• Ignores irrelevant noises, people, or other stimuli; tunes things out when necessary
• Considers a range of solutions to a problem

Emotion- and Self-Regulation Skills
• Thinks rationally, even when frustrated
• Manages irritability in an age-appropriate way
• Manages anxiety in an age-appropriate way
• Manages disappointment in an age-appropriate way
• Thinks before responding; considers the likely outcomes or consequences of his/her actions
• Can adjust his/her arousal level to meet the demands of a situation (e.g., calming after recess or after getting upset, falling asleep/waking up, staying seated during class or meals, etc.)

Cognitive Flexibility Skills
• Handles transitions, shifts easily from one task to another
• Is able to see “shades of gray” rather than thinking only in “black-and-white”
• Thinks hypothetically, is able to envision different possibilities
• Handles deviations from rules, routines, and original plans
• Handles unpredictability, ambiguity, uncertainty, and novelty
• Can shift away from an original idea, solution, or plan
• Takes into account situational factors that may mean a change in plans
  (Example: “If it rains, we may need to cancel.”)
• Interprets information accurately/avoids over-generalizing or personalizing
  (Example: Avoids saying “Everyone’s out to get me,” “Nobody likes me,” “You always blame me,” “It’s not fair,” “I’m stupid,” or “Things will never work out for me.”)

Social Thinking Skills
• Pays attention to verbal and nonverbal social cues
• Accurately interprets nonverbal social cues (like facial expressions and tone of voice)
• Starts conversations with peers, enters groups of peers appropriately
• Seeks attention in appropriate ways
• Understands how his or her behavior affects other people
• Understands how he or she is coming across or being perceived by others
• Empathizes with others, appreciates others’ perspectives or points of view