

Executive Functioning Skills

Executive function is a set of mental skills.

Control Centre (Executive Function) Skills Summary

- 1. Flexible Thinking: Being able to:**
 - Stop a task you enjoy and start one you need to do
 - Think of different ways to do things and solve problems
 - See different points of view and be able to compromise
- 2. Attention Control: Being able to:**
 - Focus attention on the right things
 - Manage distractions
 - Keep attention on one thing to finish it
- 3. Thinking Speed: Being able to:**
 - Make sense of the information you hear or see.
 - React at a good speed – e.g. answer questions or follow instructions quickly enough.
 - Finish tasks in the time given.
- 4. Working Memory: Being able to:**
 - Hold several things in your mind at one time
 - Hold information in your head for long enough to use it e.g. listen to and follow an instruction.
 - Carry out all the parts of a task in the right order.
- 5. Emotional & Energy Regulation: Being able to:**
 - Stay in control when you have big feelings
 - Be able to become calm and happy again quickly
 - Change your energy to suit a situation
- 6. Inhibition & Impulse Control: Being able to:**
 - Ignore distracting thoughts
 - Push away an unhelpful natural instinct for something safer, healthier or more helpful
 - Resist impulses to do things that aren't helpful to you or others

We use these skills every day to plan, focus and manage daily life. We may find some of these skills harder than others. Our children at Freegrounds Infants are learning to identify which skill they need to practise further as well as identifying which skills they find easier.

Signs that your child may need to strengthen their EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS:

Forgetting to bring things to school.

Difficulty with starting tasks.

Trouble paying attention.

Room, desk or bag is always messy and can't find things they need.

When faced with a problem, find it hard to think of a different way to solve it or to see from someone's view.

They tend to give up when tasks are too challenging.

Get upset easily.

Difficult to wait their turn or stay in their seat.

Get dysregulated when they are disappointed.

Finding it hard to accept another person's viewpoint.



Did you know...

Playing games is a highly effective and engaging way to develop executive functioning skills in young children. These games help build critical cognitive abilities by encouraging children to practice key skills such as self-control, memory, and flexible thinking.

Games create low-pressure environments where children can practice these skills in a fun, supportive context. Over time, this play-based learning helps children apply executive functioning abilities in academic tasks and everyday situations.

More information about Executive Functioning Skills can be found on our Empowerment Approach webpage.

<https://www.freegrounds-inf.hants.sch.uk/the-empowerment-approach/>



