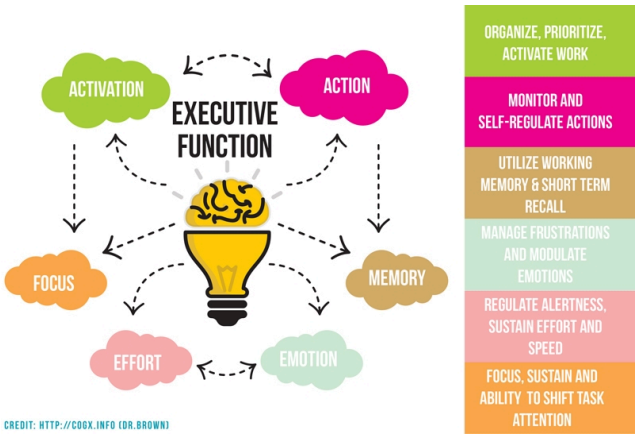
Executive Functioning

The executive functions are a set of processes that have to do with managing oneself and one's resources in order to achieve a goal. It is an umbrella term for the neurologically-based skills involving mental control and self-regulation.

Joyce Cooper-Kahn, Phd. and Laurie Dietzel, Ph.D. (2008)



Scientists believe that Executive Functioning lies in the prefrontal cortex of your brain. Many people find it helpful to think of Executive Functioning as the aircraft controller or the orchestra conductor for your brain and body. Executive Functioning keeps you in control of:

- Scheduling
- Goal Setting
- Organizing
- Focusing
- Prioritizing
- Sticking with it when it gets tough (a.k.a. persistence)
- Impulsiveness (Edge Foundation)

Symptoms of Executive Functioning impairment may include:

Inability to regulate attention, distractibility, carelessness, forgetfulness, difficulty completing tasks, poor time management and perception, lack of organization, procrastination, difficulty following conversations, hyperactive behavior (such as excessive talking and restlessness), impulsive behavior (such as blurting and interrupting), and short-term memory loss.

Did you know?

1. There are several primary types of executive functions. These functions each play their own important role, but also work in conjunction with one another to monitor and facilitate goal-directed behaviors. The basic areas of executive function are:
    - Attentional control: This involves an individual's ability to focus attention and concentrate on something specific in the environment.
    - Cognitive flexibility: Sometimes referred to as mental flexibility this refers to the ability to switch from one mental task to another or to think about multiple things at the same time.

- Cognitive inhibition: This involves the ability to tune out irrelevant information.
- Inhibitory control: This involves the ability to inhibit impulses or desires in order to engage in more appropriate or beneficial behaviors.
- Working memory: Working memory is a "temporary storage system" in the brain that holds several facts or thoughts in mind while solving a problem or performing a task. (Very Well Mind, 09/27/20)

2. Some researchers believe that executive functioning skills play a more important role in student success than IQ.
3. Participation in activities such as sports, theater and music strengthen executive functioning skills.
4. The frontal lobe of the brain, which manages high level executive functioning skills, does not fully mature until we are in our mid to late -twenties.
5. Although children cannot grow out of executive functioning challenges, they can learn strategies that help a child's brain learn ways to work around weaknesses in areas of planning, time management and organization

Resources for Educators

Helping Students Develop Executive Functioning Skill- Edutopia 11/09/18

List It, Time It, Do It: Teaching Strategies for Students With Executive Function Issues- Resilient Educator

Executive Functioning Fact Sheet (2008) National Center for Learning Disabilities

The Educator's Guide to Executive Functions: How to Understand and Support Students in Need

15 Executive Functioning Strategies Every Teachers Can Use- Pathways 2 Success 10/13/19

Resources for Families

Helping Kids Who Struggle with Executive Functions- *Child Mind Institute*
Executive Functioning 101- An Easy Intro to a Big Deal for Kids- *Carrots are Orange*
Many advertisements but a short and very informative article
Activities Guide-Enhancing and Practicing Executive Function Skills with Children from Infancy to Adolescence- Center for Developing Child, Harvard University
What You Need to Know about Executive Functioning- *Start Here Parents*

Book Lists

8 Executive Function Books Parents Need to Read- ADDitude: Inside the ADHD Mind
Leslie Likes: Top 10 Executive Functioning Books for Parents- Order out of Chaos