



Emerald Green

Specialist Education

EXECUTIVE FUNCTION QUICK GUIDE

What is Executive Function?

- Executive Function are a set of mental skills - we all have them.
- Using these mental skills are part of everyday life.
- They are linked to working memory, planning skills, self-control and flexible thinking.
- These skills develop with age.

Executive Function Challenges:

Poor short term memory.
Struggling to plan effectively.
Find it hard to start tasks.
Find following instructions hard.

Poor self-control.
Struggles to regulate emotions.
Time-keeping is challenging.
Day dreaming or over focus in one area.

Main Areas:

Working memory
Cognitive Flexibility
Self-control

Who may struggle with Execution Function Challenges:

Those with:
ADHD
Autism
Dyslexia
Depression
Brain Injuries
Dementia
(This list is not exhaustive)

Support:

Those who struggle with executive function require support and strategies.

Judgement and shame can make the symptoms of executive dysfunction worse.



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EXECUTIVE FUNCTION SUPPORT QUICK GUIDE

Organization and Planning:

- Use planners, daily checklists, and colour-coded systems for tasks.
- Break long-term projects into small, manageable steps to prevent overwhelm.

Emotional Regulation:

- Teach self-monitoring by helping individuals identify emotions.
- Use coping mechanisms, such as taking a break or using a calm-down space.

Structure:

- Maintain consistent routines for mornings, homework, and bedtime to reduce cognitive load.
- Create a clean, quiet workspace to minimize distractions.



Memory Aids:

- Use whiteboards, sticky notes, and checklists for daily routines to reduce load on the memory

Time Management:

- Utilize visual timers, clocks, and alarms to make time tangible and help with transitions between activities.

Task Initiation:

- Start with easy or high-interest tasks,
- Use the "5-minute rule" to initiate work. Dedicate 5 minutes to a task if after that you want to stop you can.

FURTHER SUPPORT & INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

[ADDITUDE MAGAZINE](#)
[SHEFFIELD CHILDREN'S NHS](#)
[ACTION FOR CHILDREN](#)