



EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

What are executive functions?

Executive functions can be described as the management system of the brain. It helps us make decisions and manage our attention throughout the day to allow us to participate and complete activities. It is similar to the executive of a company as it plans where the resources of the company will go, what the priorities are and makes important decisions. Children aren't born with executive functions, they can develop them over time.

Executive Functions includes the following skills:

- Flexible thinking
- Emotional control
- Impulse control
- Organising
- Task initiation
- Planning and prioritising
- Self monitoring
- Working memory
- Attention and concentration
- Time management



Why are executive functions important?

Executive functions are important as these skills are directly involved in all activities of daily living that a person completes. While these skills are developing, individuals may have difficulty participating in tasks. It is important to consider a person's capacity to plan, initiate, sequence and execute tasks when goal setting and developing strategies. While these skills are developing, individuals may have difficulty participating in tasks.

Challenges within Executive functions could Include:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling anxious when expectations or routines change | <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty managing and understanding emotions in self and others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty starting and/or completing tasks | <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty understanding their own strengths and weaknesses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty following instructions or a sequence of steps | <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty organising their time and possessions throughout the day |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty understanding the perspective of others | <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty maintaining attention and engagement |

The next page includes examples of executive functions.

Below are examples of what executive functions can be involved in daily activities:

Getting ready for school	
Organisation	<p>Organisation may look like incorporating strategies such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - making lunch the night before - making sure laptop is charged - having uniform ready to ensure you're not feeling rushed in the morning
Task initiation	<p>Being able to initiate a task such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - getting dressed - packing your bag - having breakfast without prompting or reminding. <p>This includes the ability to overcome procrastination and distractions.</p>
Time management	<p>Managing your time to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - all tasks are completed before having to leave for school - spending appropriate amounts of time on each task - understanding how much time is remaining

Cooking	
Working memory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading the recipe - Retaining the information - Recalling the information and completing the steps
Time management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Being aware of time/timing whilst cooking. - Planning to cook in advance for a meal that will take two hours - setting a timer to indicate when the cake that you are cooking will be ready.
Attention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitoring what you are cooking so that you are able to respond appropriately to what is occurring. - if the muffins are burning you will remove these from the oven. - If the soup you are cooking on the stove is bubbling over you will turn down the heat

For more information and to find out how Geronimo can support you with executive functions please visit www.geronimo-ot.com.au

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