



Executive functions are the mental skills we use every day to manage tasks, time, emotions and behaviour. Some pupils need extra support to build these skills. Small, consistent strategies can make a big difference.

Adjust and personalise to meet individual needs.

KEY EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

- ✓ Working memory
- ✓ Planning & prioritising
- ✓ Time management
- ✓ Organisation
- ✓ Flexibility
- ✓ Self-regulation

COMMON CHALLENGES	SUPPORT STRATEGIES
 WORKING MEMORY Difficulty holding information in mind and using it.	✓ Give one instruction at a time. ✓ Use visual supports (checklists, visuals, examples). ✓ Repeat back key information and encourage note-taking. ✓ Provide word banks or prompts. ✓ Use "brain breaks" to reset. ✓ Chunk information into smaller steps. ✓ Allow extra time to process and respond.
 PLANNING & PRIORITISING Difficulty deciding what to do and in what order.	✓ Use step-by-step checklists. ✓ Model how to break tasks into smaller steps. ✓ Use visual planners or planning templates. ✓ Help pupils identify the most important step first. ✓ Provide scaffolds and frameworks. ✓ Review and adjust plans together.
 TIME MANAGEMENT Difficulty understanding time and estimating how long tasks take.	✓ Use visual timers and clocks. ✓ Give time warnings before transitions. ✓ Break tasks into timed chunks. ✓ Use schedules to show what comes next. ✓ Build in movement and brain breaks. ✓ Celebrate staying on track.
 ORGANISATION Difficulty keeping track of materials, belongings and information.	✓ Provide labelled storage and colour coding. ✓ Use checklists for packing up and getting organised. ✓ Keep workspaces clear and consistent. ✓ Create "home" spaces for items. ✓ Help pupils use folders or trays to organise work. ✓ Regularly review and declutter together.
 FLEXIBILITY Difficulty coping with changes, switching tasks or new situations.	✓ Prepare for change – give advance warnings when possible. ✓ Use visual schedules to show changes. ✓ Teach coping strategies and model flexibility. ✓ Offer choices where possible. ✓ Keep routines predictable. ✓ Praise effort when trying something new.
 SELF-REGULATION Difficulty managing emotions, impulses and responses.	✓ Teach and model calming strategies (e.g. breathing, grounding). ✓ Use visual emotion scales or charts. ✓ Provide movement and sensory breaks. ✓ Create a calm, safe space. ✓ Use positive, specific praise. ✓ Support reflection and problem solving.

EVERYDAY TIPS

- ✓ Be patient and consistent.
- ✓ Model and verbalise your thinking.
- ✓ Use visuals wherever possible.
- ✓ Celebrate small steps and progress.
- ✓ Build routines and keep them predictable.
- ✓ Teach skills explicitly and practice together.
- ✓ Work with families for consistency.

REMEMBER



- ✓ Executive skills can be taught and strengthened.
- ✓ Progress is not always linear – that's okay.
- ✓ Support builds confidence and independence.
- ✓ Every small step counts!

VISUAL SUPPORT IDEAS


 Visual schedules


 Checklists


 Timers


 Task breakdowns


 Choice boards


 Emotion scales



**SUPPORT TODAY,
INDEPENDENCE TOMORROW.**



When we build executive skills,
we build **confidence, resilience**
and a **brighter future.**



Inclusion is everyone's
responsibility.



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