



the
education
hub

Executive Function

Executive function skills are vitally important for success in all aspects of life

They stem from the coordination of key cognitive processes:



Cognitive flexibility

which enables us to switch our attention from one thing to another



Working Memory

which allows us to hold information in our minds while we use it



Inhibitory control

which equips us to inhibit our impulses and respond appropriately

Executive function skills are essential for:

- **Paying attention**
- **Learning to keep track of our possessions**
- **Following instructions and planning activities**
- **Starting and maintaining focus on tasks**
- **Monitoring and regulating what we do**

Teachers can support executive function development by:

- **Playing games that build these skills, like *Musical Statues* or *Sleeping Lions***
- **Helping children to know when they are using their executive function skills to regulate their thoughts or behaviour**
- **Explicitly modelling the use of executive function skills**
- **Creating organised and well-structured spaces**
- **Teaching children about their emotions and how to regulate them**