

Executive Functioning: What, When, How

What?

Executive function refers to a set of mental skills that let us set goals, plan and get things done. It's the brain's management system, controlling key skills such as working memory, focus, and emotional regulation.

Three core areas:

Working Memory - working with information without losing track of what you're doing

Cognitive Flexibility - includes planning, reasoning, solving problems and multi-tasking

Inhibition Control - how you control your thoughts, emotions and focus

When?

We use executive functioning skills every day in all aspects of our lives.

Challenges may include difficulty following directions, handling emotions, staying focused and trouble managing time and space.

How?

Some examples of how we use executive functioning include:

- when we organize and plan
- overcome procrastination
- start tasks and stay focused
- understand different points of view
- regulate emotions and self-monitor

Strategies to help:

- Visual organizational aids
- create a checklist
- use technology to help manage time
- organize workspace, minimizing clutter

For more information about executive function, including strategies, visit our website:

<https://www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org/executive-function/>

Have more questions? Contact your parent mentor!

<https://www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org/maf-offices/>