

Glossary

Executive Function

Executive function is an umbrella term for the neurologically based skills involving mental control and self-regulation that 'direct' or cue what we need to do to pay attention, think, feel and act in a co-ordinated way. We do not use these cues for routine tasks that we have learned to do automatically but for more demanding tasks that require us to adapt to new situations.

Our executive function gives out commands that allow us for example, to control and allocate attention, plan, prioritise, organise, complete tasks, solve complex problems, inhibit and regulate our emotions.

It is thought that executive functions involve the frontal lobes of the brain, which develop slowly from infancy and are relatively late to mature, continuing to develop into early adulthood.

We all have strengths and weaknesses in our executive functions. Marked difficulties are, however, commonly observed in children with developmental disorders including children with speech, language and communication difficulties.

References

Bowen C and Snow P (2017) *Making Sense of Interventions for Children with Developmental Disorders: A Guide for Parents and Professionals*. Croyden: J & R Press Ltd.

Cross M (2011) *Children with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties and Communication Problems* (2nd edition). London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Henry L A and Bettenay C (2010) The Assessment of Executive Functioning in Children. *Child and Adolescent Mental Health* Volume 15, No. 2, 2010, pp. 110–119

McCloskey G, Perkins L A and Van Diviner B (2008) *Assessment and intervention for executive function difficulties*. Taylor & Francis
<https://www.dawsonera.com/readonline/9780203893753>

Snowling M J and Stackhouse J (2006) *Dyslexia, speech and language* (2nd ed.). Chichester: Whurr

Please note: Afasic does not hold copies of any referenced material. These publications should be available at academic libraries.

Written by Zein Pereira, speech and language therapist

© Afasic 2017

Afasic
E-mail: info@afasic.org.uk

Tel: 020 7490 9410

Helpline: 0300 666 9410

www.afasic.org.uk

Registered charity no. 1045617