



EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

The common components of Executive Functions are:

- Recognizing the need to take some form of action
- Initiating relevant actions while inhibiting destructive ones
- Monitoring and modulating behavior to meet changes in circumstances

Children and adults with executive function disorder display an array of behaviors that collectively can result in any combination of the following:

- Difficulty planning and organization
- Trouble identifying what needs to be done
- Problems determining the sequence of accomplishments
- Difficulty in carryout out the steps in an orderly way
- Difficulty beginning tasks
- Problems paying attention
- Trouble evaluating how they are doing on a task
- Difficulty taking feedback or suggestions
- Poor behavioral transitions

Disruption in executive function skills can limit generalization of therapy skills. On a greater scale, it can impact a large number of social and communication skills, which are critical components of life-adaptive success and learning.

Attention, inhibitions and working memory are cognitive processes associated and key to the effective development and use of executive functions.

Most executive functions are mediated through verbal language. The ability to self-talk and use language as a self-guiding system is integral to the development of effective strategies and self-monitoring behaviors.



Laguna Beach Language & Speech Clinic
Helping Children and Empowering Parents

Executive Functions

Cognitive Processes

Attention	Focuses, directs, sustains and selectively attends to relevant stimuli Shifts attentional focus as required
Inhibition	Prevents impulsive responses and behaviors Inhibits disruptive, unwanted, unintentional, irrelevant actions Delays desirable behaviors until required
Working Memory	Holds and processes information long enough to execute desired behavior

Components

Goal selection	Anticipates consequences and predicts outcomes Chooses goals based on priority, relevance, experience and knowledge of current expectations and limitations
Planning & Organizing	Generates steps, sequences, materials required and necessary information to execute task or behavior Creates relevant strategies to meet goal
Initiation & Persistence	Initiates and maintains goal-directed behavior despite intrusions, distractions, or changes to task demand
Flexibility	Demonstrates adaptability in strategic thinking and problem solving as goal or environment change Shifts attention and plans accordingly
Execution & Goal Attainment	Successfully executes a plan and strategies (original and revised) within the constraints of environment or time
Self-Regulation	Applies self-observation to monitor performance, self-judgment to evaluate performance, and self-reaction to change in order to achieve goal