

connections in mind

Brain development

The brain learns over a period of 25 years and what a child does is crucial in shaping their brain for the rest of their lives. Adults can change their brains but it takes much more effort.

Executive Function Skills

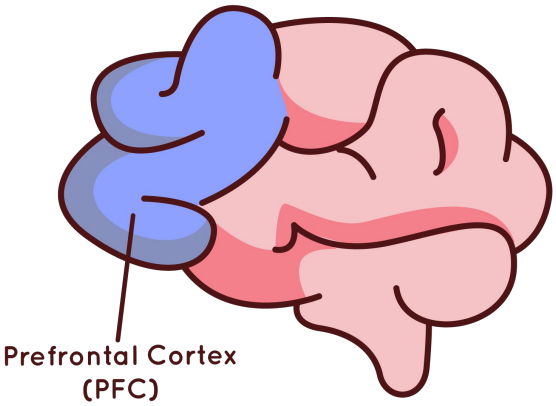
Executive function skills refer to the skills involved in the top-down control of behaviour when working towards a goal. They are needed whenever an automatic function is either insufficient or detrimental and they are used to regulate behaviour in response to the external environment. They are also needed to help us plan, organise and monitor our responses.

Connections in Mind

Connections in Mind was founded in 2015 by three like-minded women who, together, wanted to change the way society views people with executive function challenges.

We offer a variety of services:

- Executive Function Coaching
- Play Based EF Adventures
- Parent Support
- Schools Training/Consultancy
- Training for Organisations



Cognitive Executive Functions

Executive functions are brain processes found in the prefrontal cortex of the brain. They are called executive functions because they help us to **execute tasks** and regulate our emotions.

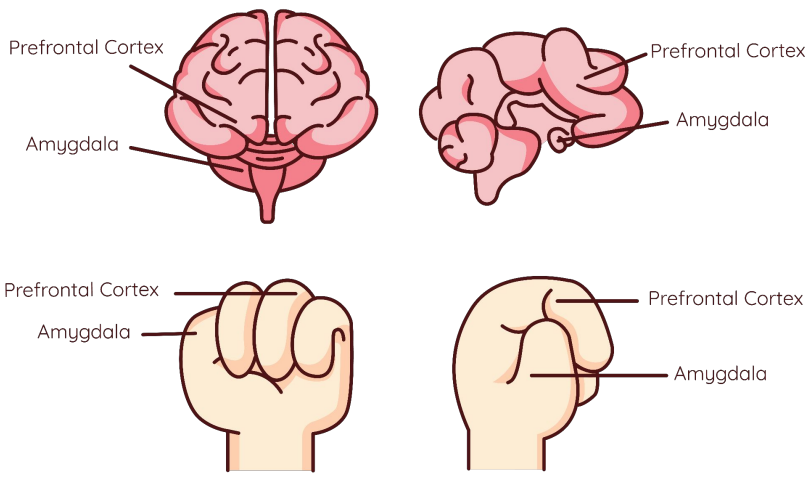
Everyone has a unique executive function profile and can benefit from working to improve their executive functioning.

You can find out yours for **free** here:

For yourself: https://cim-brainhub.com/efprofile-adult/

We also offer EF profiling for schools from £3 a student.

Dan Siegel's handy brain anatomy model





Reflection exercise

Think of a child who struggles to engage in your classes.

Which EF skill is causing the challenge?

How does it feel for them?

Well-being and EFs

Our executive functions only work optimally when we are well rested, well fed, feel safe, unstressed and connected to people in our environment. Research also shows that having fun and enjoying activities can help us restore our executive functioning.

Notice how children's EFs are impacted by their well being?

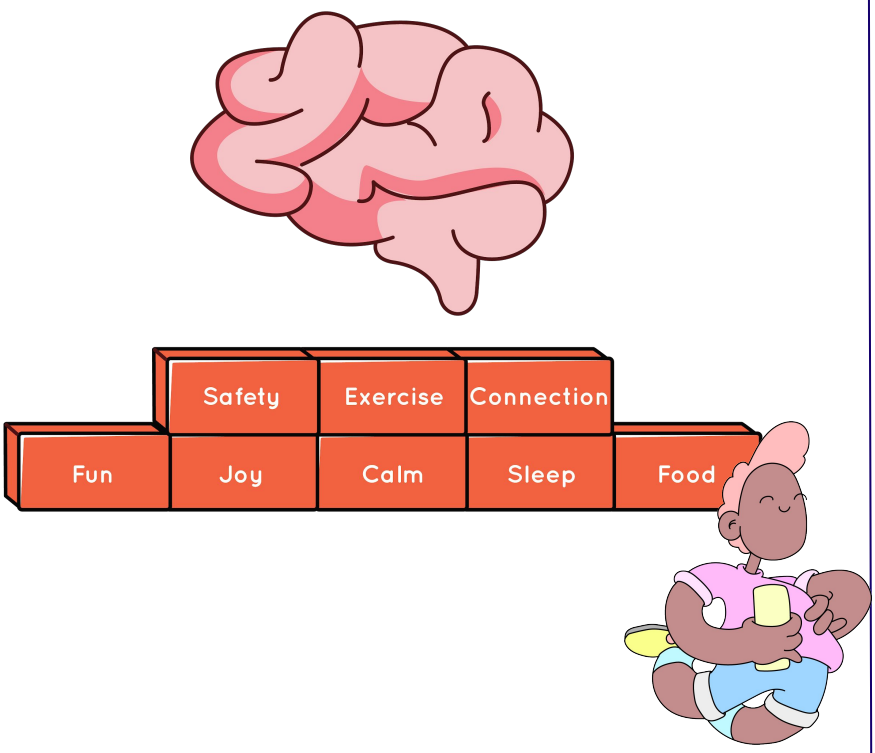
What can you do to help improve the building blocks?

Executive function challenges are normal

- Resisting temptation to say or do things
- Hold a thought in memory while doing other tasks
- Knowing and managing your feelings
- Paying attention even if tired or bored
- Starting straight away
- Planning and deciding what to do when
- Organising information or material
- Managing time
- Persisting towards a goal
- Changing, adapting and being flexible
- Being aware of what is happening and making changes to their habits and behaviour

Online course - self study

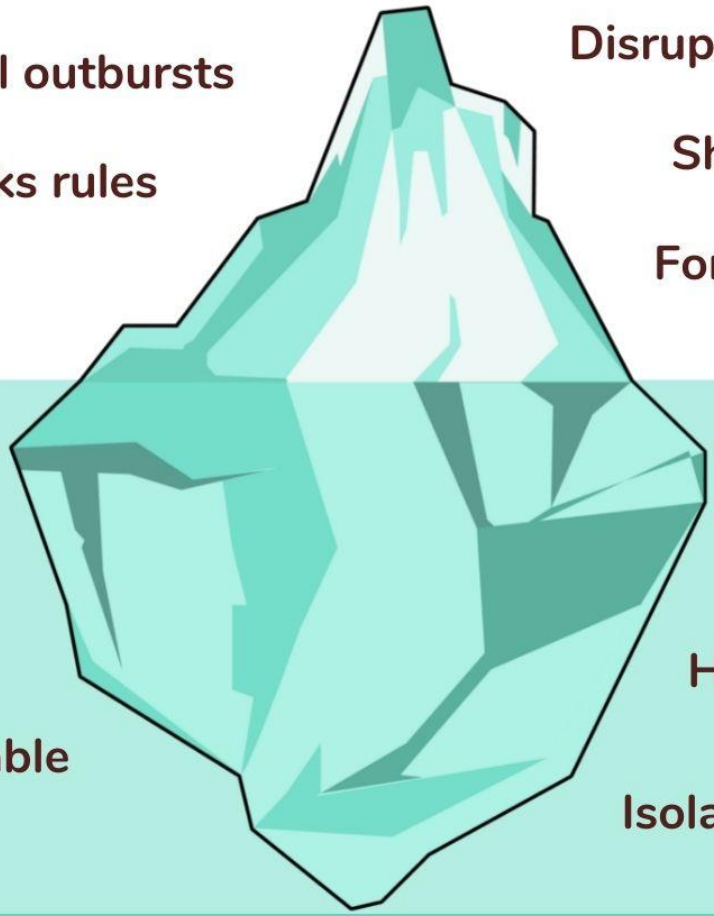
Follow this link to access to our Introduction to Executive Functions course. CPD certified options available.
https://cim-brainhub.com/product/executive-functions-an-introduction-cpd-accredited-course/



11 Executive Function Skills Definitions

Skill	Definition
Response inhibition 	The capacity to think before you act; this ability to resist the urge to say or do something and allows us the time to evaluate a situation and how our behaviour might impact it.
Working memory 	The ability to hold information in memory while performing complex tasks. It incorporates the ability to draw on past learning or experience to apply to the current situation or project into the future.
Emotional regulation 	The ability to manage emotions to achieve goals, complete tasks, or control and direct behaviour.
Sustained attention 	The capacity to keep paying attention to a situation or task in spite of distractibility, fatigue, or boredom.
Task initiation 	The ability to begin projects without undue procrastination, in an efficient or timely fashion.
Planning/ prioritisation 	The ability to create a roadmap to reach a goal or to complete a task. It also involves being able to make decisions about what's important to focus on and what's not important.
Organisation 	The ability to create and maintain systems to keep track of information or materials.
Time management 	The capacity to estimate how much time one has, how to allocate it and how to stay within time limits and deadlines. It also involves a sense that time is important.
Goal-directed persistence 	The capacity to have a goal, follow through to the completion of the goal, and not be put off by or distracted by competing interests.
Flexibility 	The ability to revise plans in the face of obstacles, setbacks, new information, or mistakes. It related to an adaptability to changing conditions
Metacognition 	The ability to stand back and take a bird's-eye view of yourself in a situation, to observe how you problem solve. It also includes self mentoring and self evaluative skills (e.g., asking yourself, "How am I doing?" or "How did I do?"

The Behaviour Iceberg



Observed behaviours

Quiet and compliant at school, explosive at home

Struggles to get it down on paper

Incomplete homework

Emotional outbursts

Disruptive

Breaks rules

Shouts out in class

Swears

Forgets things easily

Child's Emotions

Shame

Fear

Guilt

Hopeless

Unloveable

Isolated

Brain

Executive Function Challenges

Cause

Psychological Trauma

acute or chronic

Genetic predisposition

Not always as it seems.

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Techniques and Strategies

CONNECT

Empathise with the child - feel the emotions with them.

Get EF literate.

Complete our questionnaire.

See behaviour through an EF lens.

Talk about your executive function challenges.

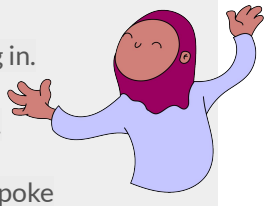


COLLABORATE

Focus on autonomy.

Get them involved in everything.

Resist jumping in.



Ask questions.

Co-design bespoke strategies which really work for the children in your care.

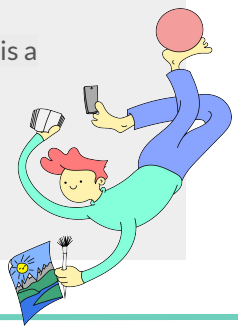
SUPPORT

Genuine specific praise.

Remove chronic trauma.

Use checklists and visual prompts to aid working memory.

Ensure well-being is a priority!



3 Stages:

CONNECT

COLLABORATE

SUPPORT

Further Resources

Harvard trauma research
https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/deep-dives/adult-capabilities/

Podcast
https://open.spotify.com/show/48malICUX6Abo1EUgxbxwa?si=014facfc3c624bb1

Free Monthly Webinar
https://cim-brainhub.com/free-live-event/

Neuroinclusive Educator Training
https://cim-brainhub.com/neuroinclusive-classroom-practice-courses/

Free Neuroplasticity Video - You Tube
https://youtu.be/ObD7sUrC5s4?si=5NcQF4AA2Fxcsqcp

Intro to Executive Functions course
https://cim-brainhub.com/product/executive-functions-an-introduction-cpd-accredited-course/

EF Coach Training for School
https://cim-brainhub.com/schools-training/

Strategy Bank
https://cim-brainhub.com/product/executive-function-strategy-bank-for-teachers/

Visit our site to find out more about our schools work
https://connectionsinmind.com/schoolseducators/