

NEWSLETTER

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What are Executive Functions? By Aarti C Rajaratnam



YouTube

Executive Function is a set of mental skills that include working memory, flexible thinking, and self-control. We use these skills every day to learn, work, and manage daily life. Trouble with Executive Function can make it hard to focus, follow directions, and handle emotions, among other things.

Executive function skills are important throughout life. These skills help to plan ahead and meet goals, display self-control, follow multiple-step directions even when interrupted, and stay focused despite distractions, among others. They help children develop skills of teamwork, leadership, decision-making, working toward goals, critical thinking, adaptability, and being aware of our own emotions as well as those of others.

It is undisputed that children with Specific Learning Disabilities have deficits in phonological processing and storage. Research has shown strong correlations between dyslexia symptoms and deficits in short-term memory and executive functioning.

The Editors

The Conductor to Your Brain's Orchestra - Executive Function Skills



Krishna Kumari
Special Educator, Inclusion Practitioner and Accessibility & Assistive Technology consultant

Think about everything you do on a daily basis. You move, think, work, interact with others, experience emotions, make decisions, plan, focus attention, switch gears, juggle multiple tasks. These skills that enable us to do so are the executive functioning skills. Executive Functions are our brain's directive capacities - how we manage information, organise and decide, act or refrain from acting, and adapt to situations, unexpected and otherwise. The prefrontal cortex keeps everything a body does in sync. It governs many higher-level activities involving mental control and self-regulation. A great analogy for 'executive function' is an orchestra, in which the brain's processes are compared to the instruments in the ensemble, all of which are coordinated by the conductor. The prefrontal cortex is the conductor coordinating every instrument and section to create harmonious music. We are not born with Executive Functions. We are born with the ability to develop them but it takes some time for these processes to mature.

Executive Function skills include:

- Attention - sustaining focus, especially for lengthy or challenging tasks that may have many components.
- Task Initiation - starting a non-preferred task and overcoming a desire to procrastinate.
- Organisation - keeping track of materials at home and in school, organising ideas and information for essays and research papers, managing digital data and files.
- Planning and Prioritising - mapping out multi-step tasks such as long-term class projects, and tackling assignments in order of importance.
- Time Management - allocating time for schoolwork and other commitments such as sports, clubs, family, friends, part-time jobs, volunteer work, and other activities.
- Working memory - a 'temporary storage system' in the brain that holds several facts or thoughts in mind while solving a problem or performing a task.
- Self-regulation/Emotional control - managing strong emotions and inhibiting impulsive behaviours.
- Cognitive Flexibility - the ability to switch from one mental task to another or to think about multiple things at the same time.
- Meta-cognition - the ability to reflect on one's own learning and have self-awareness that drives good choices.

Strengths of executive functioning skills

<p>Task Initiation</p>	<p>Children who have strong task initiation skills get started right away on projects and obligations. If someone asks them to do something, they're most comfortable if they can jump up and do it right then. They don't need deadlines as a motivator.</p>
<p>Organisation</p>	<p>Children with strength in organisation have neat and tidy work and living spaces. They have a place where things should go, and they dislike clutter. When they return from a trip, they unpack their suitcases right away.</p>

Planning/ Prioritising	Children with strong planning and prioritising skills excel at multi-step tasks. They can visualise what the final outcome should be, and they can easily sequence the steps they need to follow to achieve the outcome. In the face of a complex task or too much information, they can zero in on the critical information and discard the rest.
Time Management	Children with strong time management skills meet deadlines, arrive on time for appointments or meetings, and can judge how long it takes to do any task thrown at them. They can make adjustments, speeding up to complete something quickly if time is at a premium.
Response Inhibition	Children who are strong in response inhibition know how to hold their fire. They are the voice of reason in an argument, and before they say something they stop to consider whether what they have to say will improve the situation or make it worse.
Working Memory	Children who have strong working memories have no trouble keeping track of things they have to do, promises they have made, or appointments they have to keep. They remember details from conversations and important information about the people they live or work with.
Emotional Control	Children who are strong in emotional control are able to keep their emotions in check, even in stressful situations. They react calmly in the act of confrontation or in the midst of an emergency. They are not easily 'baited' in any stressful situation.
Meta-cognition	Children who are strong in meta-cognition are able to see the forest rather than just focusing on individual trees. They see how the pieces of the puzzle fit together. They are good at making connections between disparate concepts and experiences.
Flexibility	Flexible children make easy adjustments when something unexpected happens. In addition to being able to 'go with the flow,' they are often creative, nonlinear thinkers.

Executive function skills are critical for academic and personal success, but have historically been under-emphasised in academic settings. It is a significant factor in academic achievement. Individuals with less developed executive function skills can still succeed, but it may take more effort and dedication than those who have a strong set of those skills. The development of a child's achievement is greatly influenced by executive function. Children must be productive in the face of distractions such as phones, gadgets and computers. Their success and, consequently, their self-confidence as a learner can be negatively impacted in the long run if a deficit in the crucial foundational area of executive function skills goes untreated.

What is an Executive Dysfunction?

Some children do not develop executive functions to the same degree as their peers. For these children with deficits, additional support in the classroom may improve its development. Just as how a conductor needs to ensure that every instrument or section of an orchestra is warmed up and tuned before playing, the brain of someone with executive function challenges needs to be supported to ensure that all of its tasks are working in concert. Difficulties with executive functions can affect children in different ways and to differing degrees of severity.

What are the most common causes of executive dysfunction?

Experts have linked this issue to several conditions that affect the way your brain works, including:

- **Learning Differences:** Certain learning differences such as ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder, and Dyslexia, for example, can lead to executive dysfunction.
- **Genetic Factors:** Research suggests that genetics can play a role in executive dysfunction. Some genetic variations have been linked to differences in a number of cognitive functions including executive functioning.
- **Psychological Factors:** Psychological factors such as anxiety, depression, trauma, and other mental health issues can also cause executive dysfunction.
- **Sleep Deprivation:** Sleep is important for cognitive function, and a lack of it often leads to executive dysfunction.
- **Environmental Factors:** Environmental factors that involve high levels of stress such as tense living environments, hectic schedules, difficult course loads, and hefty work demands can all exacerbate executive dysfunction. Other environmental factors include nutrition, exercise (or lack thereof), and overall physical health.
- **Brain Injury:** Brain injuries, such as a concussion or traumatic brain injury (TBI), can lead to executive dysfunction. This is largely because the prefrontal cortex is located in the front of the brain, making it particularly vulnerable to injury.

Executive Function compensation strategies

The good news is there are things that you can do to improve your executive functioning and manage weaknesses that you have.

Ways to improve your executive function - Strategies that can help include:

- Break up large tasks into small steps.
- Create checklists for things you need to do.
- Give yourself time to transition between activities.
- Make a schedule to help you stay on track.
- Use a calendar to help you remember and plan for long-term activities, tasks, and goals.
- Use visual aids to help you process and understand information.
- Write down due dates or important deadlines and put them in a visible location.

Classroom planning, schedules, and routines

- Post schedules, directions, class rules, and expectations; make sure the student sees them.
- Have a daily routine that changes as little as possible.
- Provide folders and a basket of supplies to keep the student's desk organised.

Giving instructions and assignments

- Give step-by-step instructions and have the student repeat them.
- Use attention-getting phrases like, "This is important to know because..."
- Say directions, assignments, and schedules out loud.
- Check in frequently to make sure the student understands the work.
- Give simple and concrete written and spoken directions.

- Grade based on work completed, not points off for work not completed.
- Let the student use speech-to-text (dictation) technology for writing.

Introducing new concepts/lessons

- Highlight key words and ideas on worksheets.
- Give a short review or connection to a previous lesson before teaching.
- Allow different ways to answer questions, like circling or saying them.
- Provide a rubric that describes the elements of a successful assignment.
- Share the test format ahead of time so the student can focus on content.
- Give the student an outline of the lesson.
- Give notice (when possible) about schedule changes.

Building organisation and time management habits

- Use organisers and mind-mapping software.
- Help the student create a daily to-do list to track assignments.
- Use an assignment notebook.
- Provide an extra set of books for the student to be kept at home.
- Break down big projects into smaller sections with more deadlines.
- Provide coloured strips to place under sentences or equations when reading.

Technology tools to support executive functioning

Low-Tech Tools - These tools help support goal-directed persistence: Time and materials management and attention.

- Colour coding Notes
- Calendars - <http://www.calendarsthatwork.com/>
- Visual Schedules - A visual way of letting students know what activities they will be doing today and in what order.

- Timer
- Prioritising Strategies - 'Anxiety' categorisation (What makes you most nervous? - do it first). Colour coding from 'hot/red' to 'cool/blue'. Arrow tabs and page markers on pages in the book to denote most important information that must be learned
- Wipe-off Schedule - Create a schedule (daily, weekly). Put in a plastic frame. Use an erasable marker to check off tasks as completed. Update the date each week
- Vibrating Watch - Watches are available that can be set to vibrate and show a reminder phrase at the programmed time. Students can program reminders to go off at the beginning or end of class such as 'Turn in homework'.
- Strategy Cards - Students identify strategies to use in situations where their emotions may get out of control

Some tools for academic performance - These tools help support goal-directed persistence: Information management, attention, focus and meta-cognition.

- MS Word and PowerPoint
- Graphic Organisers
- Note Taking strategies - Cornell note taking method, Outline method, Boxing method.
- Use the text highlight tool to find main ideas, key details, new vocabulary. Interacting with text may help students focus, highlight words they do not understand and return to them later.
- Rewordify - Helps students to interact with text which may help with focus and simplify text to increase understanding.
- Students can use a data chart organiser for taking notes and keeping track of sources.
- Online Checklist Creator
- Flash Cards
- Rubrics Study

Checklist for Executive Function skills - elementary, middle and high school level

<https://bilinguistics.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Checklist-for-Executive-Function-Skills.pdf>



Dr G Senthilkumar

Director, Helikx Open School and Learning Centre

Support for Executive Function in the Academic Environment

What is Executive Function?

A group of cognitive abilities that are coordinated in the frontal lobe of the brain are referred to as Executive Function. Together, Executive Functions aid in goal achievement.

When we organise, plan, strategise, pay attention, and remember specific information, we are using Executive Functions. All tasks in life are managed with the aid of Executive Functions.

Karl Pribram is credited with coining the phrase 'executive function' to describe the activity of the frontal lobes. He wrote, "The frontal cortex appears critically involved in implementing executive programmes when these are necessary to maintain brain organisation in the face of insufficient redundancy in input processing and in the outcomes of behaviour".

- Impulse Control - the ability to stop and think before acting
- Emotional Control - the ability to manage feelings
- Flexibility - the ability to change strategies or revise plans when conditions change
- Working Memory - the ability to hold information in mind and use it to complete a task
- Self-Monitoring - the ability to monitor and evaluate your own performance
- Planning and Setting Priorities - the ability to create steps to reach a goal and to make decisions about what to focus on
- Task Initiation (Getting Started) - the ability to recognise when it is time to get started on something and then to begin without procrastinating
- Organisation - the ability to create and maintain systems to keep track of information or materials; time management

Impact of difficulties in Executive Functions on an adult's daily life

Due to difficulties in Executive Functions an adult could face some of the challenges that affect daily routine at home and home workplace. They might be unable to effectively manage their time or estimate how much time is required to do a task, hence struggle to fulfill deadlines or goals. They may find it challenging to set priorities for tasks or obligations in addition to having trouble in organisation and planning. Task completion is also impacted by difficulties they face in focusing and transitioning between tasks. Some of the other issues they face include difficulties in paying attention, recalling specifics, misplacing and losing items, documents, etc. Difficulties in Executive Function also impacts social interaction and emotional well-being. Some of the issues include postponing or refusing to respond, self-monitoring behaviour, difficulty in maintaining relationship with their spouses and raising their children.

Impact of difficulties in Executive Functions on a student's daily routine

Compared to other children, children with weak executive functioning are more disorganised. For example, they might take a very long time to get dressed or get stressed when performing light housework. They frequently misplace documents, and

they often begin week-long assignments the night before they are due, which may turn schoolwork into a nightmare.

Difficulties in Executive Functions tend to become more apparent as students move through the early elementary grades into intermediate grades, with the increasing demands of completing schoolwork independently and juggling assignment deadlines for different subjects.

Many students with learning challenges have difficulties with Executive Functions, as do many students with ADHD.

Strategies that can be imparted by educators

The use of checklists, 'how-to' lists, chunking lengthy projects, visual calendars, time organisers, and mnemonic devices are just a few of the many tactics educators can employ to help students enhance Executive Function.

Memorisation: Using acronyms help students in recalling material - the 'crazier the phrase,' the better. Create a cartoon if the student prefers to learn visually.

Cognitive Flexibility: Work using riddles and jokes to help pupils switch between word meanings in order to help them develop their cognitive flexibility.

Prioritising: Teaching pupils to highlight a text's most crucial concepts in one colour and its supporting features in another will aid them in setting informational priorities.

Note-taking: Students could utilise a two-column arrangement when taking notes from a reading to help them focus and remember information. In the first column, students ask themselves questions about the text and put the answers in the second column.

Self-monitoring and Self-checking: To assist students in self-evaluating their work, give clear checklists for assignments so that students are aware of what to look for. Customised checklists would help students become aware of their most common faults.

Some common class room accommodations

Within a classroom, accommodations can help students with difficulties in Executive Function, perform better.

1. Allow students to organise their resources and/or complete their homework within a certain period of class time.
2. For evaluations: give clear study guides.
3. For assignments: give explicit checklists and rubrics.
4. For writing assignments: give editing check lists.
5. Give deadlines for lengthy projects.
6. For tests or written assignments: allow more time.

Compared to ten or twenty years ago, children are entering a different economic environment. Children of the twenty-first century must learn 'how to learn' rather than just memorising facts and figures, hence, their success depends on their ability to use Executive Functions. Helping students to develop superior decision-making skills, adaptability to change, the ability to think critically, and the ability to make sense of information coming at them from all sides is becoming ever more important.

Professional help to train Executive Functions

A skilled professional can help develop the mental processes needed to plan and organise, pay attention for a longer period of time, finish tasks, manage one's emotions, solve problems, restrain urges, and monitor their thoughts by seeking therapy for Executive Functioning deficiencies.

The ability to solve problems effectively, or exercising executive functions, can open up interesting and fulfilling options for them in the future.



Lakshmi Krishnakumar
Director, Sankalp The Open School

Vocational Training – A Path to Build Skills Using Strengths

“Skills open the door to opportunities. They break every economic boundary and empower societies to maximise their potential. Nothing else is that powerful” - Emi Illaya

“The future belongs to those who learn more skills and combine them in creative ways”

- Robert Greene

“The purpose of education is to make good human beings with skill and expertise...enlightened human beings can be created by teachers”

- A.P.J. Abdul Kalam

Vocational education or skill training is instruction that is related to a job, occupation or to employment in general and is necessary for all students hoping to one day join the workforce. Training can take many forms, including on the job training, internships, apprenticeship and other specialised training programmes.

Focusing on vocational training, this article will be on how to create a path to build skills using strengths for students with Specific Learning Disability (SLD). Many students with SLD struggle with traditional academic subjects but excel in hands-on practical learning environments. Learning through experience and practice provides opportunities which can be more engaging and effective. These training programmes can be designed to prepare students for specific careers or vocations, which can help students with SLD identify and pursue career paths that align with their strengths and interests. This can be particularly empowering for students who may have struggled with academic subjects in the past.

Students who don't excel in any traditional academic areas, or who have little interest in them should not be met with disappointment or disapproval from parents and teachers. As Howard Gardner the American Developmental Psychologist has repeatedly pointed out, there are different types of intelligences of equal importance. For example, Bodily Kinesthetic and Spatial Intelligence are most of the time high in those who are successful as dancers and related careers. There should be no misunderstanding between recognising and developing these intelligences and alongside develop basic Verbal and Mathematical skills for all students. The strengths that come with SLD can set our students up for success beyond what we expect from their typical peers.

Understanding strengths of children with SLD

From the perspective of understanding strengths, its importance, how to find them and also how hard it is to find one's strengths. Here is some light on those areas for us educators to help ourselves and support our students.

Most of us think strength is something you are really good at. That is definitely a part of it. The magic recipe that makes up a strength is - Talent: An ability a child has a natural aptitude for, Passion: Something that they care about and are dedicated to and Action: The way they use talent to pursue their passion.

We are all born, children with learning challenges included, with talents, passions and gifts that will help us fulfill our calling and do the work that only we can do, are capable of. We see young children instinctively gravitate towards doing things they like. They can spend hours playing outdoors, drawing, colouring, playing computer games, listening to music, doing yoga, journal writing, watching a movie and thereby pick up acting skills or caring for animals. This is not a perfect world where the above areas could be pursued and turned into an occupation because they are considered as non-glamorous and not high paying. We educators and parents see them as second nature, we don't see them as strengths. We don't realise a child's knack for organising a bookshelf or putting stunning outfits together, their way with designs, their helpful nature and many other things that they are good at are strengths. On the other hand, educators and parents should be sensitive to identify these areas as strengths and encourage children to pursue them to make fulfilling careers for happy living.

At this juncture emphasis should be on early identification of skills before society puts ideas into their heads. Co-curricular education in schools should be viewed as a launch-pad for such observations to be made of students about their strengths and interests. Schools should take them to be an extension of the regular academic curriculum and design it to complement the academic programme. By providing opportunities to explore their talents and interests, this can lead to increased confidence, self-awareness and a sense of accomplishment. Co-curricular activities also support students to develop important skills such as leadership, teamwork, time management, communication and problem-solving. By helping students build social connections and develop relationship with peers who share similar interests, it can lead to a sense of belonging and increased motivation to succeed in schools and outside. This in particular will help students with SLD. These skills are essential for success in both academic

and professional settings and which in turn will serve them well throughout their lives. Co-curricular activities should be made mandatory not voluntary, should be recognised, accepted and nurtured as the path for students with learning challenges to pursue as vocations and careers in their lives.

2023 Survey by Sankalp – observations and findings

A recent survey/study was conducted by Sankalp to understand the readiness of children for vocational training, among parents/educators having/handling students in the age group 15-18 years. The objective was to find like-minded people who could form a community to drive projects that can earn a dignified living for the students with SLD.

The findings suggest most parents accept that vocational education gives advantage over traditional education for students with SLD and it should be integrated with traditional education. The parents are very open to the idea of forming a community to take this forward.

The study has captured the thoughts of parents and educators on the need for vocational education both at the secondary and higher secondary levels. New avenues that could be used to trigger formation of community-based projects was highlighted and after carefully laying down the process and obtaining sufficient funds.

The notion that vocational skills is something to target in the future has clearly been undermined in this survey where it emphasises the idea of pre-vocation and that it can start as early in the middle school. The earlier we begin getting our students ready by targeting pre-vocational skills, the more successful they will be. Vocational experiences in a classroom can definitely give students a sense of purpose and responsibility.

Though many parents are aware of their children's interests such as cooking, arts, music etc., they don't seem to see an opportunity to turn it into a career option for them. This may be due to lack of awareness on viable training and job options in these areas, acceptance in the society and sustainability in the long run.

The reality that blue collar stigma exists in a white-collar society gets reinforced and also the belief that children should pursue careers that will maintain or increase their status. Students are seen to confide that they have enjoyed working with their hands, whether it was making jewelry, doing art, grafts, gardening, grooming, caring for pets, hospitality, cooking and baking, event management, weaving, tailoring, sports, blog writing or organic agriculture.

It can also be that students in no way could tell their parents that they would rather pursue one of these occupations/vocations than go to college for a professional degree.

Students should be trained in whatever skills their natural gifts and preferences lead them to, rather than choosing careers/jobs they find meaningless. If a young adult has an interest or affinity for hair design, make up or related trades, to keep him or her away from developing the skills to pursue this calling is detrimental.

Tony Wagner, the author of 'The Global Achievement Gap' and most recently, 'Creating Innovators' spoke with educators and parents and noted that in Finland's highly successful educational system, 45% of the students choose a technical track, not an academic track after completing their basic education. The global achievement gap he writes about is the gap between what we are teaching and testing in our schools, even in the ones that are most highly regarded, versus the skills all students will need for careers and jobs in the 21st century. In this century mastery of the basic skills of reading, writing and math is no longer enough. He discovered a profound disconnect between what potential employers are looking for in young people today (Executive Functioning Skills- EFS, like Organisation, Planning/Prioritisation, Time management, Self-regulation, Meta-cognition, Working Memory, Perseverance, Task initiation, Sustained attention, Flexibility) and what our schools are providing - (passive learning environments that focus on test preparation and reward memorisation).

The survey reflected the thoughts of parents, educators and professionals - the three main stakeholders to build a community which plays

a major role in giving guidance and support to young adults with SLD. It was found that to form a community, members of the family other than parents which would comprise siblings, grandparents, friends and immediate relatives should come together. Emphasising their roles, was also a highlight of the survey, which can pave the way to form communities that will be of support to the parents and children.

Kamlesh D Patel author of 'The Wisdom Bridge' writes an eye-opening account of 'Halo Parenting', wherein parents seek and consciously cultivate a network of friends and family members who can be present in the lives of their children as they grow into adolescence and adulthood. The generations before us knew the strength of the invisible thread of attachment that held families together. That is why across cultures, there is the tradition of entering into the family business with uncles, aunts and grandparents playing the role of godfathers and godmothers. The idea behind these traditions was to have a safety net for the young adult with Specific Learning Disability, when families were closer and life was simpler, these relationships blossomed.

'The Wisdom Bridge' expounds that wisdom is shrouded in veils of simplicity. Wisdom is so simple that it escapes our attention. The intentions, thoughts and actions of the elders are caught by the hearts of the young ones. Now we need to recast these ideas to fit them into today's mould. It is a positive sign to note from this survey that parents feel family members should and would support in the decision-making process for the young adult.

A peer support group as a community can provide a safe and supportive environment to discuss their experiences and share advice. These groups can also provide opportunities for networking and socializing. Many young adults with SLD benefit from assistive technology, such as speech to text software, screen readers and spellcheckers. The community can provide access to these tools to help students succeed in their training, internships, and jobs.

To conclude, we in Sankalp believe that in its simplistic way the findings will be a harbinger of hope for many students, parents, and all other

stakeholders, because it is important to start thinking beyond school. Children with Specific Learning Disabilities face unique challenges when it comes to choosing a career or vocational option. While accommodations can be made to help them in school, these accommodations may not necessarily translate to the workplace or chosen career. Moreover, there is a wide variety of careers and vocational options available that do not necessarily require traditional academic skills. Therefore, we should look for opportunities to pursue careers that align with strengths and interests and not be limited by challenges.

It is enlightening to understand the concept of collective wisdom from the perspective of creating inclusive work environments for young adults with Specific Learning Disabilities. It encourages bringing together individuals from diverse backgrounds, experiences, and expertise to solve a common problem. This diverse perspective can help create innovative solutions that meet the needs of all stakeholders like young adults with SLD, employers, educators, parents, and disability advocates.

By tapping into collective wisdom, individuals can share best practices and strategies, such as providing extra time for work assignments or allowing for frequent breaks. Through these strategies employers can learn from one another and create a more welcoming work environment for employees. Policy changes and support systems that promote inclusivity

in the workplace for young adults can be achieved through collective wisdom. Parents as stakeholders can immensely benefit from the collective wisdom provided at appropriate times.

Finally, legitimising vocational education and training as a valid and effective pathway to obtaining skills for work could also be the way forward. To legitimise this, there needs to be a shift in perception, with greater recognition given to the role that this form of training can play in preparing individuals for work and for driving economic growth, and thus create a skilled workforce. This can include promoting vocational training as a viable option to high school students and their families. Adequate funding is required to support vocational education and training institutions and ensure that they can provide high quality programmes.

Governments, employers and education providers should recognise the value of this qualification and should promote the success stories highlighting the benefits that vocational education can provide to individuals and the wider economy.

To be holistically successful, legitimising depends on re-educating parents on the value of occupations that are not high on the social status scale.

'The Mind at Work' by Mike Rose is about the intellectual lives of everyday workers. It provides an excellent solution to our social biases about intelligence and how a combination of cognitive and manual skills is needed in occupations that our society has mistakenly undervalued.

**Shilpa Rao**

*Serial Innovator and Intrapreneur
with a large IT firm*

Managing Executive Functions – My Journey

As a person with dyslexia, managing Executive Functions such as planning and execution can be a daunting task. However, with the right strategies, it is possible to effectively manage them.

One of the strategies that has worked for me is taking rapid online/offline notes of everything that is said and writing them down as points. This helps me to keep track of important information, such as deadlines, appointments, and important tasks.

In addition, I use to-do lists for both my home and personal tasks. I use apps such as WhatsApp and Google Keep to keep track of my tasks. For e.g. I have a WhatsApp group with my husband called 'to do list' where we share our common tasks and what we need to accomplish in the week/weekend at home, planning an event etc. At work, I try to create an event for all my deliverables in the calendar, which helps to get a view of all things upcoming with dates. Adding team mates/other stakeholders to that event helps build more traction and stay committed to the goals.

Although I may not always follow my to-do lists to the letter, they help me set a general direction for my day or week. When I come back to my to-do list, I often find that most tasks are already completed.

To avoid getting overwhelmed by my to-do list, I periodically review it, but not necessarily after every task. This helps me to stay focused on the tasks at hand without getting hyper about the list. It also helps me to prioritise my tasks and make sure that I do not forget any important items.

One important lesson I have learned is that if a task is not on my to-do list, I am likely to forget about it. Therefore, it is important to put items on my list as soon as I think of them. This helps me to stay organised and on top of my tasks.

The struggle of managing Executive Functions as a person with dyslexia is real. It can be daunting, frustrating, and overwhelming. But let me tell you, with the right strategies, it is possible to take control of your life and manage these functions like a boss.

In conclusion, managing Executive Functions such as planning and execution as a person with dyslexia can be challenging. It isn't a walk in the park, but it is possible with the right strategies. Taking notes, using to-do lists, periodically reviewing my tasks, and promptly adding items to my to-do list have helped me to effectively manage these functions. So, let's get to it!



Mrudula Govindaraju

Walking a Child Through Executive Functions – A Parent’s Perspective

According to the Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University, “Executive function and self-regulation skills are the mental processes that enable us to plan, focus attention, remember instructions, and juggle multiple tasks successfully.”

I will not explain about Executive Functions and their importance, since other experts have done it in great detail. I will share the practical experience of teaching my daughter Executive Function and self-regulation skills, which she had a problem with.

We must remember that we are not born with these skills but learn them from our parents, caregivers and other adults we interact with in our childhood. And we need to hone these skills as we grow into adults. But children who have dyslexia need help with learning Executive Function and self-regulation. Here is what I did:

1. I started when she was very young. (4 years)
2. Age-appropriate responsibilities and increasing the tasks and she got better at it – At 5 years: segregate and fold her clothes and put them in her shelf in order, arrange books in her school bag, wash lunch box, wash plate after a meal, pick up play things and put them back in their place.
3. Vegetable and grocery shopping – make a list at home, identify and pick vegetables and groceries according to list, child carries a smaller bag with

vegetables and groceries, sort them after reaching home and put them in their place.

4. Plan the day – help child write a daily schedule until they can write it for themselves. You have to be patient. They will take a long time to write a schedule by themselves. A schedule helps them sequence and organise their thoughts and tasks.
5. Chores in the house – this includes sweeping and mopping, cutting vegetables and cooking.
6. Vocational skill – start exposing your child to various activities by the time they are in class 3 or 8 years old. They may take time to find out what they like. My daughter wanted to learn to play the keyboard but lost interest after 4 months. She then went for theatre classes, and after that discovered she liked to cook and bake when she was 11. Be patient and show your child various activities until they find what they like.
7. Games – My daughter loved to swim and played tennis for an hour every day for 6 days a week.

All these activities helped her learn Executive Functions. These activities also build self-regulation simultaneously.

My daughter is now a well-adjusted adult, working on a career path she has chosen for herself, when she was 12 years-old.

செய்தித் துளிகள்

கற்றலில் குறைபாடு பற்றிய மிக அருமையான பாடலை எழுதிய திரு.மதன் கார்கி அவர்களை சந்தித்து எங்களது நன்றியை தெரிவித்துக்கொள்வதில் பெருமகிழ்ச்சி அடைந்தோம். அவருக்கு ஒரு நினைவுபரிசும் கொடுக்கப்பட்டது. திருமதி.நந்தினி கார்க்கி அவர்கள் இந்த பாடலுக்கு துணையுரை அமைத்துக் கொடுத்துள்ளார். அவருக்கு எங்களது நன்றியை தெரிவித்துக்கொள்கிறோம். புகழ் பெற்ற பாடகர் திரு.கார்திக் இப்பாடலை பாடியுள்ளார். இதுவே எங்களது கீதமாக உபயோகிக்கப்படுகிறது..

நீங்கள் இப்பாடலை இந்த காணொலியில் காணலாம்: <https://bit.ly/3qujx1z>

மே -ஜூன் மாதங்களில் பெரும்பாலும் பள்ளி ஆசிரியர்களுக்கான 6 நாள் பயிற்சி கீழ்க்கண்ட பள்ளிகளில் நடைபெற்றது .

எஸ் .எஸ்.என். பள்ளி
நாலெட்ஜ் அகாடெமி
தபோவன் ,பெங்களூரு
தரமச்சந்த் வித்யாலயா, திண்டிவனம்
என்.பி.எஸ்.கோபாலபுரம்
சின்மய வித்யாலயா
சுஜய் பப்ளிக் ஸ்கூல்
ப்ரெசிடென்சி குரூப் ஆப் ஸ்கூல்ஸ் ,பெங்களூரு
ப்ரெசிடென்சி குரூப் ஆப் ஸ்கூல்ஸ்,மெங்களூரு
டிப்ஸ், ஈரோடு
ரிசெர்வ் பேங்க் ஸ்கூல்,பெசன்ட் நகர்
ஏ பி எல் குளோபல்
சிஷ்யா

மழலையர் பள்ளி ஆசிரியர்களுக்கான பயிற்சி

வெராண்டா
டிப்ஸ் ,ஈரோடு

குறிப்பிட்ட கற்றலில் குறைபாடு பற்றிய விழிப்புணர்வு பயிற்சி
 டி ஏ வி குரு ஷிக்ஷணம்
 தபோவன்
 ஜே எஸ் எஸ் பப்ளிக், பெங்களூரு
 ப்ரெசிடென்சி குரூப் ஆப் ஸ்கூல்ஸ் , பெங்களூரு

அதெனா குளோபல் , சென்னை
 எ கே ஜி ஸ்கூல்

பெற்றோர்களுக்கான குறிப்பிட்ட கற்றலில் குறைபாடு பற்றிய விழிப்புணர்வு
 பயிற்சி

தரமச்சந்த் வித்யாலயா, திண்டிவனம்

ஒன்டெர் எக்செர்சைசெஸ்

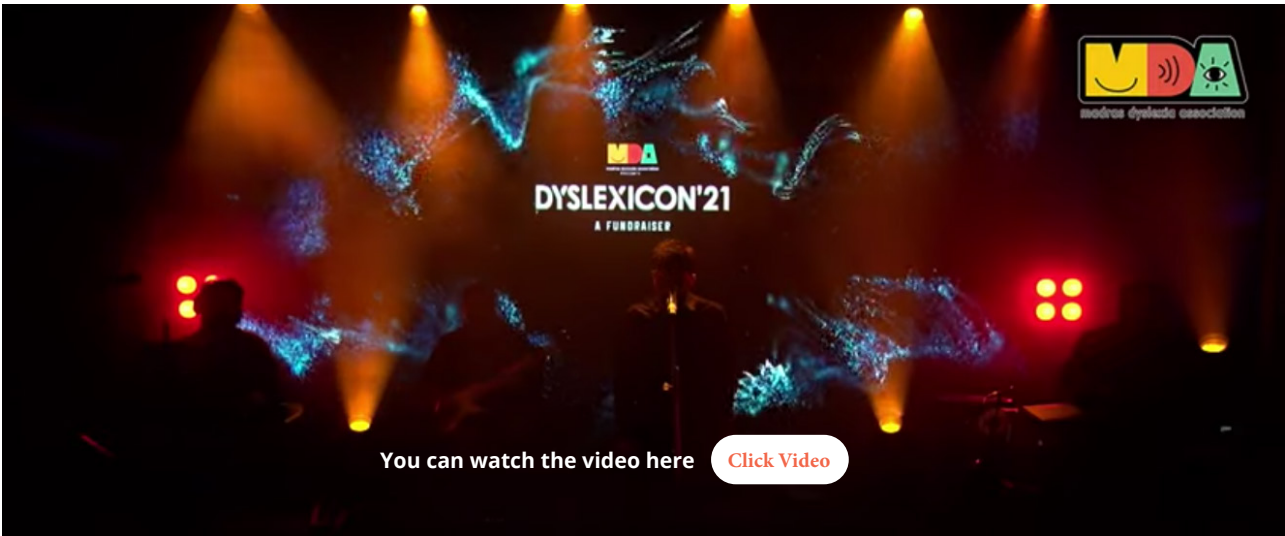
அனிதா மெதாடிஸ்ட் பள்ளி
 டிப்ஸ் , ஈரோடு

சிறப்புக்கல்வியாளர் ஆவதற்கான ஐ டி டி சி பயிற்சியும் முடிவடைந்தது .

மேலும் கற்றலில் குறைபாடு உள்ள மாணவர்களுக்கான வள அறை கீழே
 கொடுக்கப்பட்டுள்ள பள்ளிகளில் அமைக்கப்பட்டது .

எல் பி ஆர் மெட்ரிகுலேஷன் பள்ளி
 ஸ்ரீ நடேசன் வித்யாலயா
 மகாத்மா காந்தி வித்யாலயா

Happenings in MDA



It was a great pleasure to thank Madan Karky for having written a poem. Sung by the popular playback singer Karthik, it is now being used as our anthem. As a token of our appreciation we presented him with a memento. His wife Nandini Karky, subtitled the music video to embellish it even further. We thank her for this gesture.

Six-day training for teachers of mainstream schools

May-June was largely a period of training mainstream school teachers, as listed below.



APL Global



- SSN school
- Knowledge Academy
- Tapovan, Bangalore
- Dharamchand, Tindivanam
- NPS, Gopalapuram
- Chinmaya
- Sujay Public School
- Presidency Group of Schools, Bangalore
- Presidency School, Mangalore
- TIPS, Erode
- Reserve Bank School, Besant Nagar
- Sishya

Training for Pre-primary teachers

May-June was largely a period of training mainstream school teachers, as listed below.



Veranda



TIPS

Programmes for spreading awareness

Dharamchand, Tindivanam

DAV, Gurushikshanam
Tapovan
JSS public, Bangalore

Presidency Group of Schools, Bangalore
Athena Global, Chennai
AKG School



Wonder Exercises

Anita Methodist
TIPS, Erode

We also successfully completed the Intensive Teacher Training Programme.

As a part of our activities related to Resource Rooms, we set up Resource Rooms at:



L'bear Matriculation School



Sri Natesan Vidyalaya



Mahatma Gandhi Vidyalaya

Madras Dyslexia Association

94, Park View, G.N. Chetty Road,
T. Nagar, Chennai 600 017
Tel: 2815 6697, 2815 7908
Email: ananyamdachennai@gmail.com
Website: www.mdachennai.com



Editorial Team

Dhanalakshmi Ayyer
Kalyani Balakrishnan
Mala R Natarajan
Mrudula Govindaraju

Prema Raghunath
Ram S
Shanthi Chandrasekhar
Sushi Natraj

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