

# WHAT ARE COGNITIVE ABILITIES?

**Cognitive abilities are “brain-based skills we need to carry out any task from simplest to the most complex (Michelon, 2006).” They help us learn, problem solve, remember, and sustain our attention.**

## COGNITIVE ABILITIES:

- \* **Visual-Spatial Processing**
- \* **Verbal Comprehension**
- \* **Executive functions**
- \* **Fluid Reasoning**
- \* **Working Memory**
- \* **Processing Speed**

**Visual-Spatial Processing** is the ability to understand where images and objects are in space. Examples include completing puzzles or reading a map.

Test your visual-spatial processing here: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/tests/iq/visual-spatial-intelligence-test>

**Verbal Comprehension** is the ability to draw on one’s general knowledge and experience, and to reason with verbal information. Examples include recalling facts, vocabulary, communicating & reasoning.

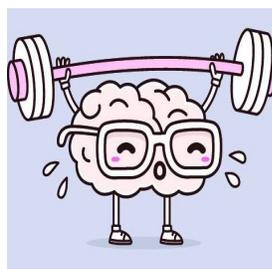
**Executive functions** is a term that refers to mental skills that are necessary for regulating behaviour and emotions and goal achievement.

## When are executive function skills helpful?

Executive functions help us start and complete projects/tasks, problem solve during conflicts, organize our belongings, follow directions, and adapt to new situations.

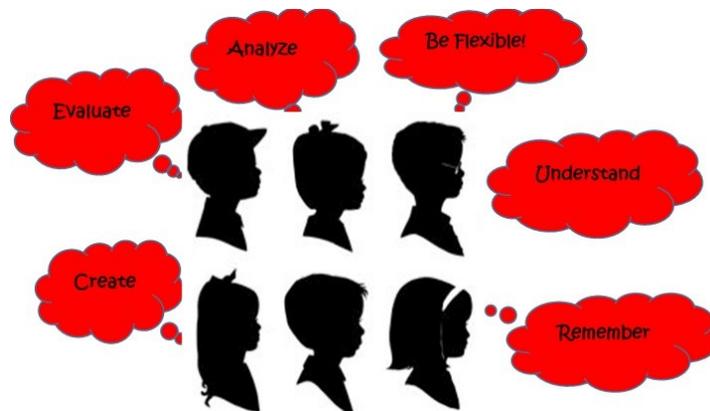
**Fluid Reasoning** is the ability to solve new problems. An example includes completing a task for the first time.

**Working Memory** is the ability to remember information while processing it. Examples include remembering a phone number or multiple instructions.



## Examples of executive function skills

- Organization/planning
- Working memory
- Starting tasks
- Emotional regulation
- Controlling impulses
- Self-monitoring
- Thinking flexibly



**Processing Speed** is the ability to process information quickly. An example includes the time it takes an individual to complete a test.

## References:

Michelon, P. (December 18, 2006). What are cognitive abilities and skills, and how to boost them? [Blog Post] Retrieved from <https://sharpbrains.com/blog/2006/12/18/what-are-cognitive-abilities/>

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Cooper-Kahn, J. and Dietzel, L. (n.d.) What is executive functioning? Retrieved from <http://www.idonline.org/article/29122/>

For further information, contact the current psychological consultant at your child’s school, or Dr. Debra Lean, Chief Psychologist, at 905-890-0708, x24330