

Control Centre Skills:

Executive Function Skills

The Empowerment Approach focuses upon children understanding their control centre skills (known as executive function skills). These are a set of mental skills that include working memory, thinking speed, flexible thinking, attention control, emotional and energy regulation and impulse control - we use these skills every day to learn, work, and manage daily life. With better understanding of their control centre skills, children will develop greater pro-learning and pro-social skills. Each control centre skill has an animal and key characteristics.

We are focussing on the following animals and children are encouraged to reflect: *Which skills do I currently have? Which skills can I improve? What can I do to help me to be at my best?*

It acknowledges that there are circumstances when you need to channel different thinking skills. For example, there are circumstances where it is important to have 'flexible thinking' whereas at other times it is useful to be more rigid in your thinking eg. when you are trying to complete a piece of homelearning when feeling distracted

Flexible Thinking is being able to change between tasks quickly and easily. Flexible Thinking is important for problem solving and getting on with people.



Flexi Foxes can stop something they are enjoying and move to a different task if needed. They look for other ways of doing things if they are stuck.

Persevering and having determination can be invaluable. It is important when you want to stay true to what you believe in or need to persevere with some challenging learning; you will stick at the learning to get it done.



Determined Donkeys are really good at persevering and being determined.

Attention Control is how well you can focus your thoughts on the thing you are doing to complete it really well.



Focused Felix is very good when you are doing something new or that needs accuracy. This thinking helps when completing a task made up of a single topic or needs you to stay in one place.

Emotional and Energy Regulation is the skill of staying in control of your feelings and energy.



Steady Swans are calm when they are asked to change from a fun activity to a more serious one. They manage their feelings so others around them are not affected by their mood.

Impulse Control is the skill of stopping and thinking before saying and doing.



Reflective Wise Owl thinking is when you take time to respond to something and make careful decisions. Wise Owls pause when they are working and check for corrections.