



Teaching strategies to enhance executive functions in early childhood education: A systematic review

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ABSTRACT: Evidence that the classroom environment can influence the development of executive functions in children raises some critical questions about specific teaching strategies in early childhood education. However, there is currently little evidence about which specific teaching strategies enhance the development of executive functions in preschool children. Thus, the purpose of this systematic literature review is to identify teaching strategies that positively promote executive functions in 3-to-5-year-old children. This comprehensive review, guided by the PRISMA methodology, explores the findings of 12 qualitative and quantitative studies that met our inclusion criteria. Through thematic synthesis, we found that preschoolers' executive functions are enhanced by three specific teaching strategies: supporting autonomy in the child, encouraging sustained shared thinking, and effective classroom organisation. These findings are discussed in relation to how early childhood teachers can incorporate certain identified teaching strategies, such as delivering free-choice activities, engaging in back-and-forth conversations, and implementing organised and consistent routines, into everyday preschool curriculums to enhance executive functions. Implications for practice and directions for future research are also discussed.

Keywords: *executive functions, teaching strategies, child-centred pedagogy, preschool children*