



## Time Management

Time management involves the ability to respond to things in a timely fashion, estimate the time necessary to complete tasks, and to make and follow a schedule. It often involves monitoring one's effort and actions, having an appropriate sense of urgency to complete tasks, and having the ability to follow a step-by-step procedure. In order to demonstrate good time management, one must be able to efficiently budget time and accurately estimate how long it should take to complete something.

### Home and School Situations Requiring Time Management

- Working well under pressure
- Completing in-class and homework assignments on time
- Working on homework for at least 15 minutes consecutively
- Prioritizing important things, such as school, over leisure
- Arriving at or leaving places on time
- Leaving oneself enough time to complete tasks
- Waking up on time
- Getting ready in time to catch the school bus

### Hints and Strategies to Improve Time Management

- Help your child to estimate the time needed for tasks. Knowing how long tasks might take is helpful in prioritizing them. Encourage your child to create a list of things he needs to accomplish and to jot down an estimate of how long he thinks it will take to complete each of the items. After doing the tasks, he could check how long activities actually took and compare that to his original estimations. Doing this on a routine basis can help him to become more accurate in time estimation and lead to improvements in his overall time management.
- Maintain a daily to-do list with your child. Post a dry-erase board in a prominent area in the home that states "To Do" on the top, followed by the date. Create two columns, one for you and the other for your child. Develop a regular morning (or evening-before) routine of listing two to four priorities for the coming day. As he gets better at doing this, it may be possible to increase the number of postings per day. Generating a longer list of items and using the process of erasing them to prioritize what might be reasonable to do on a given day, would show a willingness to move tasks around to help set realistic goals.

- Reward time management. If your child can budget his time to finish schoolwork after school, then perhaps allow him watch a favorite movie or program later that night. If your child finishes a project for school on time, then take him out to his favorite restaurant. By rewarding these behaviors, your child will become more apt to complete things on time and maintain good prioritization.
- Help your child break down bigger tasks into smaller ones. In order to successfully budget time, large tasks should be broken down into certain days and times. For example, if your child has a science fair project due in a month, then help by breaking down the task into weeks and require that certain parts of the project be done by the end of each week.
- Make certain tasks into a friendly competition. For example, to get some tasks done by a certain time, such as household chores, you could say “Let’s see if you can beat the timer.” By doing this, your child will have a form of motivation to get the task at hand done.
- Use interesting technologies to help manage time and set deadlines. Many children, even younger ones, love to have cell-phones for communicating with friends. Cell-phones can be particularly useful for remembering homework, setting alarms and deadlines, and providing reminders for activities. If you are paying for your child’s cell-phone plan, (which in all likelihood you are doing) require that he use his cell-phone for these types of time management technologies.
- If you struggle with time management yourself, acknowledge it and work on making small but identifiable improvements. Many children who struggle with time management have parents who experience similar problems. View improving your own time management skills as your responsibility for teaching your child better skills. Rather than attempting to make yourself the most efficient of individuals, set small realistic goals that you articulate in front of your child. For example, you might choose to make school lunches the evening before school rather than in the morning so that you have a bit more time for getting everyone up and ready to go to school. Other small changes such as using paper plates to reduce the amount of clean up after dinner or purchasing and posting an extra large calendar in a public area, display how you are working to improve your own time management skills and will assist your child in applying these same skills to themselves.

### Books on Time Management

Cooper-Kahn, Joyce, Ph.D. and Laurie C. Dietzel. (2008). *Late, Lost, and Unprepared: A Parents’ Guide to Helping Children with Executive Functioning*. Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House.

Cox, Adam J., Ph.D. (2007) *No Mind Left Behind: Understanding and Fostering Executive Control--The Eight Essential Brain Skills Every Child Needs to Thrive*. New York, NY: Penguin Books. [Chapter 6]

Dawson, Peg, Ed.D. and Richard Guare, Ph.D. (2009). *Smart but Scattered*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press. [Chapter 18]

Espeland, Pamela, and Elizabeth Verdick. (2005). *Smart Ways to Spend Your Time: The Constructive Use of Time Assets*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit.

Morgenstern, Julie, and Jessie Morgenstern-Colon. (2002). *Organizing From the Inside Out for Teenagers: the Foolproof System for Organizing Your Room, Your Time, and Your Life*. New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company.

Richard, Gail J. and Jill K. Fahy. (2005). *The Source for Development of Executive Functions*. East Moline, IL: Lingua Systems.

### Websites and Articles on Time Management

LearningWorks For Kids (<http://www.learningworksforkids.com/EF/time.html>): The premier resource for executive function information, offering a detailed explanation of time management, tips for parents, and activities to improve this skill.

University of Florida (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/HE795>): This site provides comprehensive tips for helping your child to develop positive time management skills, from waking up in the morning, to after school activities, to a bedtime routine.

ADDitude (<http://www.additudemag.com/adhd/article/991.html>): This article focuses on how to instill time management skills in children with ADHD in the classroom, however many of the same techniques can be applied within the home.

Activity Village ([http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/time\\_management\\_skills.htm](http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/time_management_skills.htm)): This site provides an overview of time management, as well as supports that can be implemented to instill time management skills in children at both the primary and secondary levels.

### Games and Activities That Can Practice Time Management

- Boggle, Catch Phrase, and other board games that use a timer
  - Games which require the use of some sort of timer allow players to practice using an allotted amount of time appropriately.
- Preparing dinner
  - Have your child help prepare dinner and plan how to time all menu items so they will be complete around the same time.
- Video games where working quickly produces gains
  - Games such as Super Mario Bros, Nintendogs, and Tony Hawk, reward players for performing tasks quickly which can help your child to practice efficiency and time management.
- Dance Dance Revolution, Guitar Hero, and Rock Band
  - Limit the amount of time your child can play one of these games and challenge them to reach a particular level by that end time to allow them to practice working under pressure.