

START THE YEAR OFF R



SCHOOL RIGHT

10 TIME MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR YOUR STUDENTS

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Bringing order out of the chaos started with a very personal mission. My son was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Executive Dysfunction and some learning issues in kindergarten. I immersed myself in research, hoping to learn all I could to help him organize his tangled-up world. I eventually created my organizing business and an academic planner to help students get organized.

Time management is a challenge for everyone. And in this fast-paced culture, effective time-management skills are essential. How can you help your student master basic time management strategies? Here are some helpful tools and tips.

- 1. Use an academic planner to help your student plan and stay on track.** Whether they use a paper planner (ours is the “Academic Planner: A Tool for Time Management”) or electronic calendar, make sure their planner is set up as a grid system so they can see their week at a glance. Record all their class assignments, after school activities, work commitments, even plans with friends. This will allow them to know what they need to do AND know when they have time available to PLAN to get things done.
- 2. Remind your student to do the hardest, longest or thing they least want to do, first.** This way, they will find it satisfying to move on to tasks they find more enjoyable.
- 3. Analog clocks as opposed to digital clocks show that time moves and lets your student know where they stand in relation to the rest of the hour or day.** Hang an analog clock

in each room that your student does homework so that they can see the “sweep” of time.

- 4. Make their tasks achievable.** Your student is more likely to complete their assignments if they are broken down into manageable parts. It is much easier to write one paragraph for an essay in an afternoon than it is to complete the entire research paper. Have them check their planner for available pockets of time and schedule accordingly. Setting unrealistic goals can set them up for failure.
- 5. If your student is tackling a long term project, begin by working with them to outline the goal of the project and break down each step into manageable parts.** Assign deadlines for completing each one. Rely on visual organizational aids like planners, Post-It calendars or dry-erase boards (my favorite) to record all important information and deadlines.
- 6. Help your student determine how much time things take them to do.** To become more realistic about how long certain tasks take, have them write down time estimates and then compare them to the actual time it took them to



complete the task. The more a student records, and corrects, how long it takes them to do something, the better they will become in narrowing the gap between estimated and actual time.

7. Devices such as timers and buzzers can help a student self-monitor AND keep track of time. For example, during quiet or reading time, a timer placed on a student's desk can help the student know exactly where the time is going and also help the student become aware of when transitions to other activities will take place.

8. If your student will allow it, set it to music! Music is rhythm and rhythm is structure. And we all know that students with learning differences and attention deficits need structure. Music can help a student plan what to do next, anticipate and react as well as sooth and regulate the brain. Have your student create a 30-minute play list of music they love. The key is to play the same playlist every time they sit down to work. Eventually the music will act as a time marker and your student will know that when they hear Bruno Mars they are in the homestretch.

9. Get active. Put "energy" into their tasks by having your student stand up to read or walk the dog while they review their notes.

10. Make homework fun! Set up homework stations around your house and play "Hide the Homework" with your student. By adding energy and fun into their daily routine you will keep them motivated and on-task.

It is important to help your students understand that just like any other muscle, strengthening their time management "muscle" takes consistent training. Learning to manage time requires learning new behaviors, developing unique strategies and a great deal of patience. I like to equate it to running a long distance marathon. As their "coach" we want to help our students identify their struggles, what skills are essential for them to carry out certain tasks and assist them in developing strategies and tools to help them make it to the finish line! [GO](#)