

Boys & Girls Clubs of America Time Management Tips

As an adult fitting everything into one day can be tough. Have you ever thought about how your child does it? Juggling school and home responsibilities with extracurricular and social schedules can be challenging, so how can you help?

Time management is the solution. Teaching your child how to prioritize responsibilities and leisure activities assures that there's time to fit in what has to be done with the things that he or she loves to do. When children develop time management skills, they are able to successfully manage day-to-day tasks in school and future careers. Here are some tips for helping your child incorporate time management into her or his life:

Establish a daily routine — Establish a morning, after-school and bedtime routine. Help your child make a list of all the things that need to be done before going to school and check off the items as they are completed. Do the same for after-school and bedtime schedules.

Create a family calendar — Post a family calendar on the refrigerator or some other location that everyone will see daily. Write each family member's name and corresponding activities, appointments, must dos, reminders, etc. Encourage your child to take on this responsibility.

Have family meetings — Family meetings are not just a time to talk about serious issues, but also to celebrate. Take the time to have everyone in the household talk to one another about family events and happenings, important decisions, vacations, etc.

Help your child develop organizational skills

- **Keep a "to do" list and calendar** — Have your child write down the things he or she needs and wants to do along with keeping a daily, weekly and monthly calendar. Keep the calendar and to do list in a place where it can be found easily and have your child check off each item as it's completed.
- **Set goals** — Goals should be achievable yet challenging. Help your child set short- and long-term goals. Reinforce how short-term goals lead to larger, long-term goals.
- **Prioritize** — Rank the importance of the things your child needs to do. Is there a deadline? Is the deadline negotiable? Are there any consequences if she or he does not meet the deadline?
- **Do must do's first** — Encourage your child to do the things that are priorities first, even if they are things that she or he doesn't like to do.
- **Break big jobs into little jobs** — Breaking down big jobs into smaller tasks that are more manageable lessen the chances of your child becoming overwhelmed.
- **Combine tasks** — When it's possible, combine two or more tasks to save time.
- **Have everything you need on hand to get the job done** — Before your child begins any task, make sure she or he has the materials needed. For example, it's a good idea to

make a homework kit with paper, pencils, pens, markers, crayons, scissors, ruler, calculator, etc. Teach them how to keep up the inventory of that kit on their own.

- **Eliminate distractions** — Assist your child in arranging her or his time and work space to keep interruptions at a minimum.

Other important tips to remember

Be a positive role model — Your attitude and behavior rubs off. Be positive in your words and actions! Demonstrate commitment, do any task well and don't procrastinate.

Be flexible — Things happen. Support your child in taking a positive attitude and preparing for possible changes. Allow extra time for the things that may arise.

Be realistic — Don't panic if your child can't get everything done or if it's not perfect. Being unrealistic sets up children for defeat.

Have a back-up plan — Sometimes the first plan is not the best plan. Plans may need to be adjusted, postponed or rescheduled.

Follow up/check in — Make sure that you are supportive and discuss progress. Watch for frustrations and obstacles. Encourage your child to review to-do lists and calendars regularly. Remove items that are unnecessary and unrealistic.

Be a cheerleader — Praise and encourage your child.

Reward achievement — Celebrate when your child makes improvements and completes projects.

Build in fun — Encourage fun, healthy activities and hobbies. The weekend can be the time to take a break and go to a movie, go to the mall, spend the night with friend or go biking.