

PARENT HANDOUT: HOW TO MANAGE MY TIME



ADHD Skill 8

WHAT IS HOW TO MANAGE MY TIME?

- ▶ How to Manage My Time helps you make calculate how much time you need to do tasks and do them on time. Practicing this skill can help you stay on schedule, complete your daily routines, and meet your goals.
- ▶ The strategies below help you 1) figure out how long it takes you to complete tasks, and 2) organize your time in order to get them done. Try them out to improve your time management!
- ▶ Depending on your child's age, some strategies may work better than others. Try them out to improve your child's time management!

HERE'S HOW TO MANAGE YOUR TIME

You can introduce this skill by saying, "It can be hard to know how much time we need to do things. Let's read through this list of strategies together and see if they help you manage your time."

- 1 Understand Your Timing.** To manage your time, you first need to know how long it takes you to do different tasks.
 - a If you're unsure or find that your guesses are usually wrong, play our **Check Your Time game**. Using our list of quick activities, write down how long you think each task will take, time yourself doing each one, and then compare your predicted time with your actual time. Add your own activity ideas to the game, focusing on those tasks where you often need more time than you expect, or where you find yourself running out of time to finish.
 - b As you do tasks in the future, **time yourself** to continue improving your awareness of how long it takes you to do things.
- 2 Plan for Homework.** Before starting your homework, do some **quick calculations** to plan your time.
 - a For example, if you have 3 hours to complete your homework after dinner and 3 classes with homework assignments, you have about 1 hour to spend on each subject. If you finish any assignments ahead of schedule, you can use your extra time to check your work or start the next one.
 - b If you have trouble paying attention or doing a task for a long time, remember to schedule in **short breaks** (e.g., a 5-minute break after completing each homework assignment).
- 3 Make Schedules.** Use a **calendar** to keep track of your homework assignments, extracurricular activities, and social events. You can color code to match each type of activity or use separate calendars.
 - a At the beginning of each school year, **write important dates** in your calendar (e.g., first and last day of school, breaks and vacations, school dance, etc.). Review these with your parents and/or teachers so you're all on the same page.
 - b Make a **weekly schedule** at the beginning of each week. Include the times you have to wake up, leave for school, get home, and go to bed. Add that week's appointments, activities, and social commitments. **Review your schedule** every day to see what's coming next. See our example and fill in the blank one for yourself.

4 Increase Your Motivation. Identify a small way to **reward yourself** for managing your time well. This can be a challenging skill to master, so be sure to acknowledge your hard work.

a You can also increase your motivation to stay on schedule by considering the **consequences** of not managing time well. For instance, if you fall behind in the morning, you may end up getting marked tardy, which can lead to getting a detention!

5 Anticipate Challenges. Think about **obstacles** that may keep you from following your schedule or plan. For example, if you tend to forget your planner at home, you may need a reminder to put it in your backpack at night. Or, if you have the hardest time staying on schedule in the morning, you may need to leave extra time to complete your tasks before school. Your parents and teachers may have ideas too, so talk this over with them.

a **Set reminders** to help you stick to your schedule. You can set alarms on your phone or watch, ask others to help you, or use a calendar app that sends automatic reminders when something is coming up in your schedule. Some families find that sharing their calendars makes it easier to keep track of everyone's activities.

b At the end of the day, review your schedule and **cross off** everything you were able to do. Notice where you successfully managed your time, and give yourself a pat on the back! For those things you weren't able to do, try to identify why. See if there is anything you can change to get them done next time.

c Don't be shy about **asking for help** when you need it. Everyone can use support with challenging tasks. Your family, teachers, or friends can play an important role in helping you practice the strategies above. Together, you can work hard to improve your time management and reach your goals.

You can do it! Let's review the 5 simple steps to Managing Your Time:

1. Understand your timing
2. Plan for homework
3. Make schedules
4. Increase your motivation
5. Anticipate challenges

CHECK YOUR TIME GAME

Predict how long it will take you to do each of these short tasks, then time yourself doing them. To make it more fun, you can also ask others what their predictions are. Add your own activity ideas too!

Task	How long do I think this will take?	How long did it actually take?
Brush your teeth		
Read 2 pages in a textbook		
Choose clothes for tomorrow		
Eat breakfast		
Write your address 5 times		
Take a shower		
Put on your shoes		
Do 10 jumping jacks		
Vacuum a room		
Sing the alphabet		
Pack your lunch		

JESSICA'S WEEKLY CALENDAR

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Wake Up	6:30	6:30	6:30	6:30	6:30	8:30	8:30
Leave for school	7:30	7:30	7:30	7:30	7:30		
Get home	3:00	4:30	3:00	4:30	3:00		
Bedtime	9:30	9:30	9:30	9:30	9:30		
Appointments						dentist at 11:00	
Activities	band tryouts 4th period	softball practice 3-5		softball practice 3-5			dinner at grandma's 6-8
Fun							movies with melissa and Alicia 1-3

MY WEEKLY CALENDAR

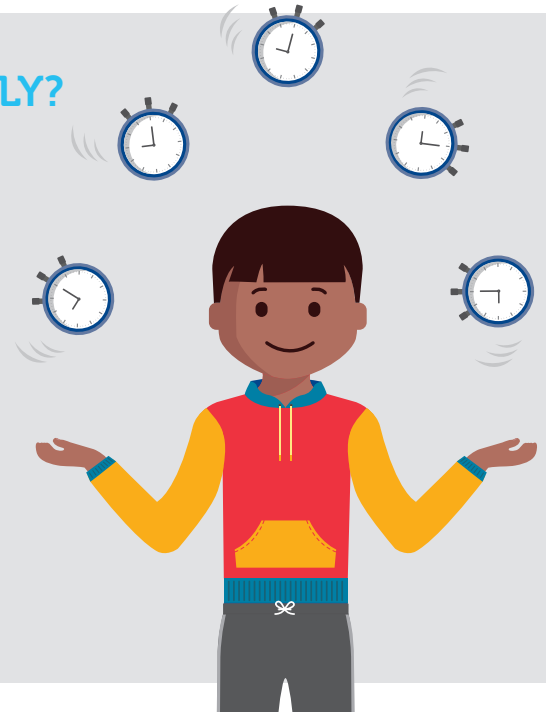
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Wake Up							
Leave for school							
Get home							
Bedtime							
Appointments							
Activities							
Fun							

PARENT HANDOUT: HOW TO MANAGE MY TIME TIPS



HOW CAN MANAGING MY TIME HELP MY FAMILY?

- ▶ When your child has ADHD, it can be challenging for them to pay attention, focus on one task at a time, and keep track of their time. Assignments or chores may take longer than they expect, it may be hard to get things done when they're supposed to, or they may find that they're always behind schedule, even if they wear a watch.
- ▶ This can lead your child to feel frustrated at school, get into arguments at home, or miss out on fun activities. Using the strategies on these worksheets, they can become better at using and controlling their time, which will help them be more independent. Over time, practicing these skills can help your child stress less and succeed more!



COMMON PARENT CONCERNS

My child tries to set aside enough time, but it always takes them longer than they expect to do things.

This happens to many people with ADHD, so your child is not alone! Have them play the Check Your Time game to learn how much time they need for small tasks, and then have them time themselves completing a task that usually takes them longer than they predict. This will give you both valuable information about how accurate their time estimates are. You can also offer guidance or ask their teachers for ideas based on how much time you've seen your child need to do things. Your child can use this information to improve their future planning.

Some of the other strategies in this packet can also help your child get better at managing time, such as How to Get Things Done (ADHD Skill 6) and How to Organize My Stuff (ADHD Skill 7). If these ideas are new to your family, they may be challenging for your child at first, but with practice children find that these skills become easier and easier to use!

My child says they have no idea how long it takes them to do things, and nothing ever feels urgent. But, we are always fighting about them taking too long or not taking things seriously.

It can be frustrating to have trouble keeping track of time. Many people, even those without ADHD, find this hard to do. See if your child is willing to try some of the strategies we suggest here. Encourage them to notice if changing the way they manage their time helps them understand how long it takes to do things, follow a schedule, and complete tasks.

My child now sets up their schedule and plans their time well, but they aren't motivated to get any of it done.

It can be hard to stay motivated to do hard or boring things! Help your child identify what they'll gain from being better at time management. For example, can it help them get their homework done faster so they have more time for fun? Will it decrease how often they argue with you about your schedule? It can also help to identify the reward they'll earn when they're able to follow their schedule (step 4, reward yourself). Even a short break to do something they enjoy can feel great after working hard!