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Teaching Time Management at Home

by Becky L. Spivey, M.Ed.

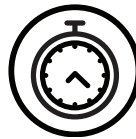


Teachers often hear, “My child... never finishes his/her homework before bedtime... lives in the moment... puts things off until the last minute... is always late getting ready for school... never gets to practice on time... completes one assignment and doesn’t finish any others. Why?” There may be several reasons. Some students are able to come home, finish homework, complete school projects, or practice piano lessons, and pack their book bags for the next school day – unassisted. Then, there are others, especially those who have weaknesses in processing or executive functioning skills, whose lack of time-management skills affects their success both in and out of school.

Children spend as many as seven hours a day at school and some as many as four more hours in after-school care and/or participating in after-school activities. Once arriving at home for the evening, there may be projects and homework to complete, more lessons to practice, etc. Should teachers teach time-management skills? **Yes!** Even if some students manage their time well, teachers should incorporate, directly and indirectly, simple time management strategies in the daily curriculum. Then, parents should help their children follow through with those strategies at home.

Tips for Time Management at Home

Time-management skills must transition from school to home. Use the following strategies to help your children continue learning and understanding the importance of time-management skills.



- **Provide a clock or visual timer for your children as early as preschool and help them gauge their time spent on tasks.** Some visual timers display time increments in color. As time passes, the colored section disappears. You can also use a sand timer. The child is able to “see” how much time is left. Use timers for bath time, dressing time, or TV time, and for homework. Set times should be appropriate for the age and ability of the child.



- **Give your children some “down time” before “homework time.”** Provide a healthy snack of fruit or crunchy, raw vegetables and dip or crackers and cheese to give your children a boost of energy in order to push through another hour or so of “school.”



- **Teach increments of time to early learners by relating a period of time they are familiar with to their time on a task(s).** For example, “You have thirty minutes. That is as much time as it takes us to get to Grandma’s house.”



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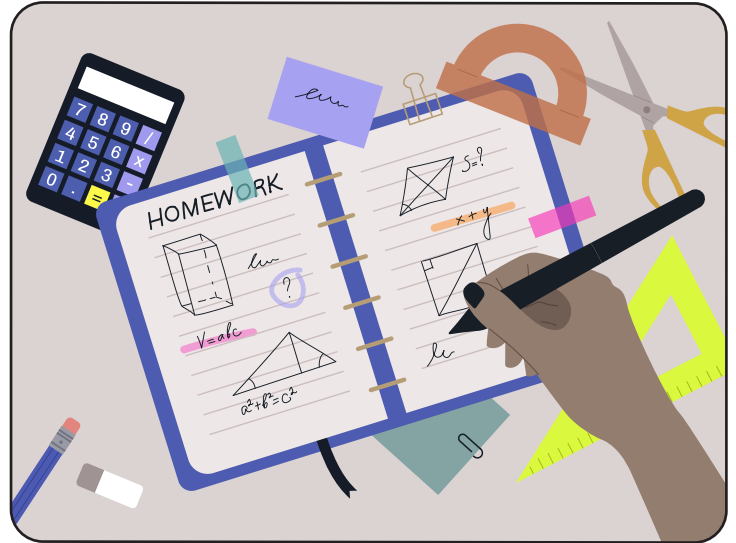
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- **Provide a quiet place, free from TV or other distractions, that is stocked with school supplies where your children can sit and work without interruption.** Set a clock/timer for an increment of time appropriate for the child's age and ability. Adjust times accordingly if you see that the "time's up!" factor is stressful. Allow them to have more time if time is not being wasted or interrupted.



- **Monitor homework assignments daily.** Guide your children in prioritizing lengthier or more challenging assignments first. If your child has an IEP (Individualized Education Program), ask the special education teacher for guidance as to how much time your child needs or should spend on assignments. Some students with IEPs have accommodations suggesting time increments for completing homework assignments. Some students may have a reduction in the amount of work assigned (e.g., writing 5 sentences with spelling words rather than 10). Ask your child's teacher for the strategies that work best for him/her while working in school.



- **Keep expectations for completing work at home the same as those in school.** Use your children's planners/agendas to keep open and consistent communication with their teachers.

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