

Neurodiversity Home 101:

Learning time management

Learning to manage one's time is an important skill that is useful at school, at work and in life in general. Some children have **struggle to manage their time**. There are **many potential reasons** for this. The child may have poor organisational skills or poor executive function skills that may be associated with a Neurodiverse condition. They may struggle to tell the time or may get easily distracted. To help your child learn to manage their time:

- 1) Have a family calendar and use it to keep track of things you have planned. The sort with a column for each family member might be particularly useful to help your child see what things they will be doing in the coming days/weeks. Make it fun with different colours for different people and/or stickers for special days.
- 2) Encourage your child to consistently use their school planner/diary to record after-school activities, homework, etc.
- 3) Alternatively, encourage your child to use their mobile phone as a planner – you can set reminders and alarms to help them remember tasks.
- 4) Have a household routine with set mealtimes, bedtime, etc. to help your child plan and structure their days.
- 5) Set aside some time each week to sit down together and plan for the week. Emphasise the need to do some things early, to avoid getting too busy/stressed. E.g. if they know Maths homework is always due on a Wednesday, do they need to do other homework early so they aren't rushing on Tuesday night?
- 6) Create check-lists for everyday routines to help make sure everything gets done. This avoids lots of time-wasting about "I didn't know I had to do that!" or "What do I do next?".
- 7) Break down tasks into small, manageable chunks. E.g. writing an essay might seem very difficult. However, it's not as hard if you first highlight keywords in the question, then make a short list of key points for the essay, then use that list to make a plan (as a list or mind-map), then use the plan to write the essay one paragraph at a time.
- 8) Use a timer (e.g. on your phone) and set your child five minutes to do a short, achievable target. You can gradually build up the time given for tasks. This will help your child become more aware of how long five minutes, half an hour or an hour actually is/feels.
- 9) Compare times, so that your child has a concrete understanding of how long something will take, e.g. "this cake takes 20 minutes to bake – that's the same length of time as your morning break at school".

