



Handy Handouts®

Free informational handouts for educators, parents, and students

Executive Function at Home (Part 2 of 4)

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As children get older the mental demands on them increase exponentially. **Executive function** skills are essentially “the management system of the brain” (Belsky). Skills such as planning, organization, task initiation, time management and regulating emotions are all part of executive function. It is important for children to not only learn these skills, but be able to generalize them, or use them across settings, such as at school and home. Parents and caregivers can support executive function skills at home in easy and natural ways, that will likely lead to a more harmonious home and success at school.



1. Organization

Think about your child’s bookbag. Is it neat, with loose papers in the right folder, pencils in a pencil pouch, no crumbs and random things in sight? Or is it a mess, and a bit scary to go into? If it’s the latter, you and your child may be frustrated by it, especially when field trip permission slips are misplaced or technology is ruined inside of a messy backpack. Organization is a skill many kids need to be taught and then reminded about until it becomes second nature. Here are some organization tips for your child:



- Make sure your child has what they need to be organized – folders, pencil pouch, spaces dedicated to their clothes, their toiletries, and their school supplies. It may be helpful to label items and spaces, using words and/or pictures.



- Set aside time to organize. It takes time to both become organized and stay organized. Choose a time, every day, to help your child organize their things and/or their room. This will also give you an opportunity to review the day talk about what’s happening or happened.



- Encourage your child to immediately put things where they belong, especially after finishing a task. This helps normalize organizing, making it part of daily routines.



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(cont.)

2. Time Management

Time management is organizing one's time. When working on something, does your child give his or herself time to complete the task? Time is abstract, and can be hard for kids to grasp and use to the best of their abilities. Help your child develop strong time management skills using the following tips:



- Start timing some of the tasks your child does, so you both can get a feel for how long it takes to do the dishes or get ready to go to bed. Once you know about how much it takes to do tasks, you can hold your child to established times and help them use their time efficiently.



- If your child brings home a big project, sit down and chunk the project, setting dates to finish various components, so the project is more manageable.



- Use a timer to help your child stay on track. Hourglass timers are often less distracting for children, who may focus on the numbers and countdown with a traditional timer.



Related Handy Handouts®:

- [647 – Executive Function at Home \(Part 1 of 4\)](#)
- [104 – Good Study Habits and Organizational Skills Create Successful Students](#)
- [334 – Teaching Time Management at Home](#)
- [274 – Visual Timers](#)

Resources:

<https://www.hillcenter.org/7-executive-functioning-skills-your-child-should-have/#:~:text=Executive%20functioning%20skills%20facilitate%20the,%2C%20time%20management%2C%20and%20organization.>

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/executive-function/>

<https://www.understood.org/en/articles/what-is-executive-function>

<https://www.thepathway2success.com/10-executive-functioning-skills-the-ultimate-guide/>

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