

ORGANIZING TIME

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Starting in the third or fourth grade, your child should be taught and encouraged to use daily schedule books and calendars. By posting a large “family” calendar in a common area, all members of your family can enter and check events, such as sports practices, family outings, and school dates. This is a good model to learn from.

Also, encourage your child to use the monthly calendar in his working notebook. Monthly calendars are important for reminding you and your child of upcoming tests, long-term project due dates, and special activities. Items and events such as these should be noted on the monthly calendar during the school day, and checked by the parent each day. Pencil should be used because dates may change.

A daily planner can be used to sketch out how homework, play time, club meetings, and the like can be worked into each day. This helps avoid the conflict that often occurs about when to do homework, since you will reach a decision together based on the available hours in a day. It also shows your child that his free time is valued and will be included in his schedule.

It is important not to make assumptions about how well your child can tell time without a digital clock, understand and follow class schedules, or sense how time flows daily, weekly, and monthly. Some students have difficulty with the simplest aspects of time and planning, and these weaknesses may not be readily apparent. I once knew a very bright teenager with learning disabilities who thought that “quarter after four” meant 4:25 (because a quarter is twenty-five cents), and another who thought that on March 30 he had a month to complete a report that was due on April 3 (because it was “next month”).

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