

# THE HELLER PSYCHOLOGY GROUP LLC

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## READY FOR THE NEXT “NORMAL”?

Executive Function Related Tools  
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### Teaching and Modeling Time Management/Planning Skills to Increase Independence

- 1) Help your kids to use alerts and notifications on devices/programs that they already use or have access to.
  - a. **Google or Apple Calendar:** even for elementary school aged children, if they are in front of the computer playing games, they can see the alerts go off. This program can be highly useful on a tablet or smartphone as well.
  - b. **Basic task list apps on computer or tablet:** If your child/teen is on a computer, tablet, smartphone, or pretty much any electronic device, they have access to a task list app.
    - i. Picking a simple one such as Reminders (Apple devices only), Todoist, or Google Tasks could work well.
    - ii. For younger kids: There are many picture apps (and ones with simple words) that can work well for a calendar and tasklist/visual schedule for children as young as three. Of course, with young kids, electronics time should be somewhat limited, devices should be locked on the specific program, and auditory alerts can be useful so that a child does not even have to look at a device.
      1. A few suggestions include: CW Calendar, Schedules, and KidsToDoList.



- 3) **Estimating completion time for tasks and blocking out sufficient time in your calendar is important to make the schedule work realistically.** If the estimated time does not fit with your actual availability, it is suggested that you adjust your plan.
- 4) **Trying not to overschedule things will allow for wiggle room as needed.**
- 5) **Keep a master task list of things that you need to complete.** Using a task list app such as Reminders, Google Tasks, or Todoist may be useful. Alternatively, writing items on a whiteboard, Google Doc, or Word document, may work well.
  - Schedule items to be completed on specific days and during specified time slots if that makes sense for you.
- 6) **Think about physical organization.** For example, if you need to keep track of your child's worksheets or other items that are printed out for Zoom classes, consider printing everything for the week and putting them in folders labeled by day. This makes it easier to find last minute.
- 7) **Consider a central location for important information (i.e., child's weekly class schedule, list of assignments), your schedule, etc.** If you like doing things electronically, keeping this information in an app/computer program such as Cozi, a shared family Google Drive (with folders), or even listed out in a shared notes app or Google Doc could be useful. If keeping things physically is more helpful, think about using a bulletin board, small file system in a common area, or other similar approach.
- 8) **Get regular physical activity in if safe to do so.** If short on time, try to at least work physical activity into family time and even think about how you can get movement in while working (i.e., do reading or respond to emails while using a desk elliptical, take five minute timed breaks between tasks and do pushups or sit-ups).
- 9) **Incorporate relaxation time in if feasible, especially right before bed.** Watch a television show that you enjoy, try not to watch the news if that makes you more uneasy right before bed, do a puzzle, or play a board or card game with a family member.
- 10) **Most people are on screens far more these days.** Trying to take breaks from the screen throughout the day, and limiting time right before bed can be helpful. While it may feel good in the moment to scroll through social media right before bed, if you find that that impacts your sleep, try putting the phone down 30 minutes before bed and see if that helps you to fall asleep better and stay asleep during the night.

- a. **Using bedtime reminders, such as those available through the Bedtime feature on Apple devices, can be helpful.**

**11) If you find that you are getting into frequent conflicts with your significant other over parenting or anything else, set aside specific time a few times a week to have a discussion on specific issues that are arising and problem solve solutions.** It may be helpful to write down what was discussed and agreed to, so both people can refer back to it later if needed. It is also far more productive in most cases to discuss issues when not in the heat of the moment.

#### OTHER RESOURCES

1. [www.chadd.org](http://www.chadd.org)
2. <https://www.hellerpsychologygroup.com/psychology-blog>
3. <https://www.hellerpsychologygroup.com/guide-to-time-management>
4. <https://youtu.be/RAAmmVkQVhY>
5. [www.understood.org](http://www.understood.org)
6. <https://youtu.be/mVsXpXqIrRI>

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