# **The importance of punctuality and time management**

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Punctuality in school life and time management is key to success in academics. Here's how you can teach your child the importance of time management in student life.

Understanding the importance of time and punctuality makes it easier to achieve success in today's competitive world. And, this applies very much to students, as they have a lot to learn, together with the pressure to perform better than before.

So, it becomes the responsibility of parents to make their children understand the importance of time management and the value of punctuality.

## **Time management and punctuality for students:**

In her book, 'The Culture Map', Professor Erin Meyer talks about how different cultures value time. According to her, time is viewed differently across cultures as either 'linear' or 'flexible'.

On the linear end of the spectrum are the Germans and the Swiss. For them, punctuality and structure are paramount. So, it's no surprise that the Swiss are famous for their clocks. A linear concept of time is also quite important to American and Australian cultures. We have all heard the phrase 'time is money' and this is particularly relevant in American culture, where profit, wealth, and productivity are highly valued.

So, where does India feature in the spectrum? Professor Meyer places us in the 'flexible' group, along with Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, and Kenya. According to her, those who grow up in these countries prioritize adaptability over productivity. They derive more value from their relationships with others than from adherence to routines and schedules.

Both ways of relating to time have their own benefits, and the key for students is to find a healthy balance between the two. If we adhere too much to the linear concept of time, we risk becoming inflexible and incapable of responding to unforeseen situations. On the other hand, if we lean towards the flexible mode, we run the risk of becoming unproductive and incapable of the following structure. Since most Indians are inclined towards the 'flexible' concept of time, we will focus on the other end of the spectrum to balance the views.

### **Importance of time management:**

Time management is very important for students, as it plays a defining role in helping them prioritize their tasks. With proper time management, a student can plan his preparation for the exams and crack them successfully. As Lee Iacocca, the legendary business leader said, "If you want to make good use of your time, you've got to know what's most important and then give it all you've got."

### **Benefits of time management for students:**

How well a student can manage her time determines how well she would do in her studies. But, the benefits of time management are not just limited to studies, it also extends to other areas of life as well. Here are a few benefits of time management for students:

* Get things done on time
* Less stress and anxiety
* Enough time to do things with clarity
* More time to do additional tasks
* Increased productivity
* Gain a good reputation

### **How to teach the importance of time management and the value of punctuality:**

Although teaching your child the importance of time management and punctuality may seem like a tough task, it isn't so. Here are a few simple things you can do to help your child learn to be punctual and manage time:

**1. Toddlers - safety, predictability, and broad structure**

Toddlers and young children aren't as conscious of time as adults are. However, they are sensitive to patterns and consistency and respond to circadian rhythms. Parents can develop a sense of routine and consistency in toddlers by fixing times for eating, napping, and playing. They can help consolidate a toddler's relationship with time by placing certain activities in relation to others. For example, a child can develop an association that every day, after his father leaves for work, it is time for his first meal. He can also form the association that when it gets dark, it is time for him to read a story and then go to bed. Routines like these are important for young children to develop a sense of comfort within their environment.

**2. Young children - draw up schedules and model appropriately**

By the time children start going to school, they develop a better awareness of their external environment and begin to learn how to tell the time. At this stage, you must teach your child how to read time from both digital and analog clocks, as both provide different experiences of relating to time and engage different areas of the brain. With the introduction of scheduled homework, children begin to understand the importance of planning and managing their time. Therefore, establishing a routine will help them. The popular reality TV show 'Supernanny' advocates introducing a clear routine for misbehaving children as the first measure to bring them under control. Supernanny suggests placing timetables at prominent positions in the house so that the child is constantly reminded about following the specified routine. This is an effective and enjoyable way of helping children manage and finish their tasks on time, and striving to be punctual.

At this age, children unconsciously internalize both good and bad habits they see in adults, as they are unable to differentiate the good from the bad. So, during the primary school years, parents should model those behaviors which they would like to see in their children. This involves practices like going to bed and waking up early, and exercising self-control with the use of technology.

**3. Teenagers - values, accountability, and independent time management**

With the onset of teenage, children start developing their sense of self and thinking about how they fit into the world. It may be difficult to inculcate routine and punctuality at this stage, if not done earlier. Teenagers can be rebellious and may not obey directives unless they understand the reason behind the instructions. They may question the need to follow certain instructions, especially if they perceive that there is hypocrisy or bias. For example, a teen might question why she needs to wake up every morning at 6:00 a.m. for school when her parents frequently oversleep and miss their own alarms. Parents can solve this problem by beginning to model the behavior they would like to see in their teenager, and by asserting that they always practice what they preach. They should make an agreement with their teens to learn from mistakes and work towards being more punctual.

Teenagers also tend to reflect on their personal values. So, parents can talk to them about the importance of punctuality as a value. They can explain how being punctual is a way of showing respect for others and ensuring personal success.

Teens can also be encouraged to independently plan their schedules to balance their studies with hobbies and other commitments. To help them do this, parents can introduce teens to organizational tools such as diaries and to-do lists.

### **Do's and don'ts while teaching time management and the importance of punctuality:**

**Do**include unstructured play in your child's daily routine. Daniel Siegel, a US-based professor of Psychiatry, talks about the importance of downtime and playtime in maintaining healthy brain function. Play allows the brain to de-stress and absorb new information and stimulates and strengthens the cognitive processes. This, in turn, helps a child carry out structured tasks more efficiently.

**Do** explain the importance of time management for maintaining social relations. For example, if your teenager is running late for a dinner at his grandparent's house, insist that he take responsibility for the delay and call them to explain the reason. Such experiences will help him understand how his time management skills, or the lack of them, can directly affect others.

**Don't**ignore the importance of adequate sleep, exercise, and a healthy diet. These factors are crucial in helping your child feel energetic to meet his daily commitments and stay focused. They also ensure high levels of motivation and clarity of thought, which will help him manage his time better.

**Don't**underestimate the effect of screen time. Emerging research shows that the use of interactive devices like tablets, smartphones, and laptops affects children's sleep, cognitive development, and emotional states. The use of these devices reduces their ability to focus and pay attention. So, discourage your child from using any of these devices before bedtime, as it can keep his brain in a hyper-aroused state and prevent restful sleep. This can make him feel lousy during the daytime.

### **Importance of punctuality:**

Punctuality, one of the most critical elements of discipline, is essential for children to be successful in life. Being punctual gives children a sense of stability, security, and self-confidence.

A M Sultana's paper, 'A Study on Time Management and Punctuality Issues among Students at Secondary School, Kedah', published in the American Journal of Economics (2013) says that punctuality and time management affects the process of learning. She also says that parents can play an important role in explaining to their children the importance of being punctual.

### **Benefits of punctuality:**

"If you want to be regarded as a valuer of life, then first value time."? Oscar Auliq-Ice, American writer and businessman.

Children, who understand the value of punctuality and attend school on time, get better grades and enjoy a greater sense of well-being and confidence. Toddlers, whose parents know time management and its importance, experience a sense of ease and predictability in early life. This helps in shaping their view of the world. They perceive the world as a stable and safe place. Teenagers with a grasp of the importance of punctuality in life tend to be more goal-oriented and successful in multiple areas. Their risk of developing mental disorders is also low, as they keep themselves busy, have long-term goals, and are more likely to exercise regularly.

A child who learns the importance of time management and punctuality early on acquires the ability to perform better achieves success faster. As a parent, be the catalyst in bringing about a transformation in your child's life and enjoy her achievements.