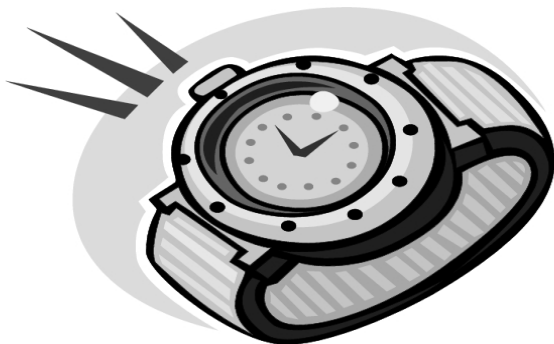


You can find dozens of books and programs that describe the skills of time management, for example, setting objectives, making lists, dividing tasks into A, B, and C priorities, setting aside time for certain types of activities, and so on. But all of those activities miss the central ingredient. We are not actually discussing the management of time. We actually are learning to manage ourselves.

Time doesn't play any favorites. Every one of us has the same twenty-four hour day to work with. The difference, then, is how we manage ourselves during the twenty-four hour day. Those of us who manage well, seem to accomplish more and seem better



satisfied with our lives. Those of us who are pulled here and there with no evident organization, seem to accomplish less and seem less satisfied with our lives.

Kids are no different. They, too, have the same hours available equal to those available to their peers. Just like adults, some kids seem to get a lot done; some seem to accomplish very little. Yet both groups are active during the same number of

hours. Since the clock ticks off the same 1,440 daily minutes for everyone, we have to ask ourselves how we can organize our lives to accomplish what we want. That's the way to gain a sense of satisfaction with our use of our hours.

#### What do we want? Where are we going?

This is a difficult question for children. The younger they are the less likely they are to have a clear sense of where they are going. So one of the jobs of a parent is help them set some beneficial goals. For example,

- Getting better grades
- Finishing family chores
- Improving health or an athletic skill
- Learning about XYZ
- Developing needed character traits

Self-management needs to start with something that your children can visualize as a worthy goal. Talk to them about their interests and help them focus on an outcome that they would see as desirable. As much as possible, involve your children in selecting and in picturing themselves in that favorable outcome. "You say that you want to be a first string baseball player. Can you see yourself on the field? How does it feel to get a hit? Do you see yourself being congratulated after scoring a run? And so on."

The first step, therefore, is to set a target, to make an outcome important. Don't overburden your children with all the things they should be doing. Use one self-selected outcome as the model around which you can develop a pattern for future objectives. Gradually, together, you will build the kind of self-management that we sometimes call time-management.

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