

Put First Things First®

Put First Things First means to decide what is most important and to take care of that first. Thinking about what needs to be done tomorrow or by the end of the week can be overwhelming, especially for children. Learning to think of which things are the most important and taking care of them first allows children (and adults) to be less stressed. If your child uses a planner at school, then he or she has a great organizational tool to Put First Things First in writing. By writing down his or her responsibilities and planning ahead, last-minute trips to the store, missed events, or missed homework are avoided. If your child does not use a planner, having a weekly log would also be helpful. This could simply be a piece of paper that is used each week. Modeling this behavior is one of the best ways to teach children.



Younger-Child Activities

1. Create a list of things your child needs to accomplish throughout a week. With your child, rank the tasks in importance. Then rewrite the list in order of importance. Use a planner or calendar to schedule time so that the important things are done first.
2. Role-play with your child about the consequences of forgetting to study for a math test. How will your child feel? What are the consequences? Then role-play how it will feel to be well prepared and get a great match score!
3. Encourage your child to design or decorate his or her own planner or weekly activity log.
4. Read Chapter 3 of *The 7 Habits of Happy Kids* book with your child and then complete the Parent's Corner.

Teen Activities

1. If your teen doesn't currently use a planning system, buy one. (It makes a great gift, and is an investment that will pay off in the long run.) If your teen prefers electronics to paper, no problem. There are a variety of online and software resources as well.
2. Ask your child to make a list of what he or she thinks is his or her biggest time-waster and what to do about it.
3. Plan time as a family. This is especially important as your children get older and want to spend more and more time with friends. Set aside a couple of hours once a week as family time. Watch a movie, go out to eat, play games, cook dinner together—whatever fits your family. Protect this time and make it a tradition. Everyone in the family should block it out on their calendars.