

Parent's Guide to 1st Grade

Part 4: Time Management

An easy-to-use resource to prep parents and young learners for a new school year



- Setting Up Your First Grader for Success
- Setting Up Chores
- Time Management
- It's OK to Say No



Setting Up Your 1st Grader for Success

Resilience is the ability to bounce back from stress, challenge, and adversity, and ultimately be strengthened by facing that challenge. As a result, resilient children become more adaptable to change and increasingly able to tackle bigger and bigger challenges. We all make mistakes and fail, but resilient people get back up again.

Resiliency starts from attitudes and beliefs children hold of themselves, factors that are internal such as optimism, humor, and flexibility. These are all traits that we can continue to strengthen as children grow and develop.

Here are some ways to foster and encourage resilience in your child:

Foster Optimism

Resilient people are also optimistic. Help your child to see to see the glass as half full whenever possible, while still accepting their feelings. Give validation and respect to their take on the world, and also gently show them a more optimistic one.

Keep Perspective

Starting in the elementary school years and well beyond, things that seem little to adults can be internalized as much bigger by your child. When this happens, remember not to minimize their view of the problem. Let them talk and process, then help your child problem solve solutions and ways to respond to challenges and stressful feelings in the future.

Praise Effort

When an adult praises a certain behavior in a child, it shows them what is most valued. When you praise your child, focus on effort. By doing this, it helps to guide your child to learn from their mistakes and feel good about working hard, even if the outcome did not happen as expected.

Don't Rescue (all the time)

As parents we all rescue sometimes, but it's important not to do it every single time. It's important to let children learn how to manage challenges. If there are reasonable times where there are natural consequences (like forgetting homework at home), allow those to unfold. When challenges do arise, always remind your child, "I trust you because you got this!"

Support Responsibility

Encouraging the growth of responsibility by establishing consistent routines and systems helps build resilience also. Things like regular chores will help your child self-regulate their own behavior, develop self management skills, as well as help them to feel accomplished. (See the next section for age-appropriate ways to give some responsibility over to your child.)



Setting Up Chores

Although some children may complain about chores, having a regular set of age-appropriate responsibilities helps children develop independence, strong learning habits, and a sense of pride! Keeping a chore chart can be visual inspiration as children add stickers or cross off completed tasks. When they explore new tasks, they will learn by trial-and-error and can better apply their learning to other situations.

Sometimes it is helpful to have a few chores for your child to choose from for the week. There can be chores that they need to do for themselves, and some optional chores that help the whole household. In the beginning of the week, have a list of potential tasks for the household and allow your child to choose a few from the list that they will complete throughout the week. Using a blank chore chart, fill in the chores they “must do,” and then have your child add their chosen chores. Having this choice will help encourage independence and give ownership over their tasks, which will motivate them to complete all their tasks!

1st Grade Age-Appropriate Chores

- Put folded clothes away in drawers with guidance
- Set out clothes the night before
- Put on clothes
- Pack their backpacks
- Take out the garbage
- Sort the recycling
- Organize and vacuum their bedroom
- Dust rooms in the home
- Unload some dishes from the dishwasher
- Dry nonbreakable dishes
- Help set the table



Time Management

Our children are busy! When the school year begins there is homework, after-school activities, music lessons, activities, chores, and family time. That's a lot to do before bedtime! This packed schedule can be overwhelming for parents and for kids.

The key to keeping on top of all these activities is planning and organization. First grade is the perfect time to begin supporting your child in the very early foundations of prioritizing. While they will be able to do this independently in a few years, starting now will set habits to help your first grader internalize them.

Below are a couple of useful tools and techniques that will help your first grader navigate their busy schedules.

Five Steps for Prioritizing Activities With Your Child

Co-manage your child's time by:

1. Teaching how to measure time: Use a visual timer, like an online timer or an hourglass, and have your child do something fun or creative for 30 minutes using the timer. Discuss how much time has passed and how much they were able to accomplish in that time.
2. Sorting activities by priority: Distinguish between necessary activities, like going to school, and those that would be nice to do if there is time. Complete a chart with activities written on rectangles and sort them into the chart based on "Must-Do," "Maybe," and "No" activities.
3. Labeling the time frames in a daily calendar: Block off school time on the list. Then add time periods in 30 minutes to 1 hour increments on the daily schedule.
4. Organizing activities in a daily calendar: Place time-dependent activities on the schedule first followed by the "Must-Do" activities. If there is not enough time for the "Must-Do" activities, return to the prioritization conversation.
5. Sticking to the agreed-upon schedule: Follow-through is important. Once you make a commitment to someone or an activity, do your best to keep the appointment. If your child does not want to attend something they showed interest in earlier, make sure to probe for a reason and talk through options and commitments before deciding not to do it.



Is It Time to Say No?

It's okay to say no!

There are so many activities and events that are worthy of your child's time. Most activities will help them mature as they are challenged to work with others, be more independent, and learn new skills. But sometimes there is just not enough time in the day to fit everything in. Sometimes, trying to squeeze everything into a day leads to frustration or exhaustion.

The Playing With Priorities chart* has children sort their activities into three categories, including a "no" column. Do not be afraid to say no and give reasons why it has to be so. Saying no to one thing will:

- Teach your child to assess activities based on the merits of the activity and personal preferences
- Help your child to get the most out of every activity without rushing from one activity to the other
- Allow your child to specialize in something and decide if they enjoy it

If your child decides they do not like the activity anymore, it is okay to stop the activity or lower it on the priority list. Be flexible and assess activity prioritization daily or weekly.

Playing With Priorities



Chart Directions: Cut out the dashed rectangles. Write activities for the day on them. Sort them into the T-chart based on importance for the day.

● Must-Do	● Maybe, will do.	● No, will not do.
School		
Homework		
Chore: _____		

* <https://www.education.com/worksheet/article/playing-with-priorities>