



# *Time Management*

Training Review Module

1 Clock Hour



**Child Food Program of Texas**

P.O. Box 5465, Katy, TX 77491  
Tel: 281.395.7000; Toll- Free: 877.395.6560  
Fax: 281.395.7002  
[www.childfoodprogramoftexas.org](http://www.childfoodprogramoftexas.org)

***Instructions For Completing This Module:***

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1. After reviewing this material with your day home representative, please read and study the material carefully.
2. Complete the test for the material and return it to Child Food Program Of Texas at your convenience. There is no deadline to have this test back to us.
3. When we receive your completed test, we will evaluate it and then send you a certificate for 1 clock hour for completing this material.

***Objectives For This Module:***

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1. To help providers set priorities more effectively
2. To help providers manage time more efficiently

***Table Of Contents***

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<b>Priorities Table</b> .....	Page 3
<b>Time Audit</b> .....	Page 4
<b>Make Instant Changes</b> .....	Page 4
<b>Systems For Staying Organized</b>	
<b>Reporting Problems</b>	
Plan for tomorrow .....	Page 5
Determine your prime time .....	Page 5
<b>Sample Filing Categories</b> .....	Page 6
<b>Systems For Staying Organized (con't)</b>	
Work for efficiency .....	Page 7
Temper the telephone .....	Page 7
Organize as you go .....	Page 7
Learn to delegate .....	Page 7
Avoid procrastination .....	Page 7
<b>Manage That Paper</b> .....	Page 8

# Time Management

Everyone has unique and distinct life goals but few of us feel we have enough time to carefully and consciously balance work, family, and personal priorities. Sheree wants to get paperwork under control so she can compute expenses for her monthly board meetings. Sam works from crisis to crisis and feels he doesn't really know some of his staff. Kendra needs to be able to leave work behind when she locks up at the end of the day so she can enjoy her husband and young son. Karin knows that lack of organization makes her feel like a poor director and unsuccessful professional. All of these people want to get organized, once and for all, so they can avoid burnout and have the energy to work hard at the jobs they love.

You work with children and families and that means that people will always come first. In service

professions, like child care and education, there is little room for people who would rather spend time with a calculator or computer than with other people. But in order to be responsive to people, you need a few basic organizational skills to maximize your time and efficiency so you can get the important things — the ones you really care about — done.

Time efficiency involves two issues: your priorities and your schedule. Examine your priorities and write them down. Some people find it useful to make a list of everything that is important and then categorize the items by A, B, or C according to their significance. Only you can decide for yourself whether writing a weekly parent newsletter is more or less important than going to the library to find a new resource book. Your priorities will guide how you can best use your time.

<i>Jenny's Priorities - 2006</i>	
A	Managing paperwork in a timely manner.
B	Building collaborative relationships with professional peers.
C	Investigating real estate for a new program site.
A	Maintaining supportive relationships with co-workers.
B	Rewriting the parent handbook.
C	Keeping the art supply closet clean.
C	Making contacts in the mental health community.
B	Developing a training workshop on science activities for toddlers.
A	Helping teachers earn CDA credentials.

## *Jenny's Time Audit*

TIME	MONDAY
7:30	Check in with teachers. Visit about the weekend.
8:00	Reorganize piles on desk. Try to prioritize. Answer two phone calls from sales people.
8:30	File a few immunization records. Distracted by out-of-date files and pull them out for later storage.
9:00	Hank's mom calls to talk about last week's book fair.
9:30	Go to kitchen to find something to eat.
10:00	Walk by playground and pull some weeds.
10:30	Come in from outdoors and go to kitchen for something to drink.
11:00	Remember phone call to licensing rep scheduled for 9:30. Call but she's not there.
11:30	Gather last week's food use summary. Look for grocery receipts.
12:00	Start to plan tomorrow's staff meeting. Ms. Sophie brings in Hanna who just vomited.
12:30	Try to phone Hanna's mom but can't find her new work number.
1:00	Lunch.

Another useful exercise is a time audit—an examination of how you actually spend your time. Use a chart similar to the one shown to track your time for a few days. Be especially careful to note time wasters—the dragons that destroy careful planning and create frenzy. Does your time audit tell you that you are spending most of your time on the items that are lowest on your priority list? Are you doing work that should be done by someone else? do you use routine tasks to hide from important ones? Review Jenny's priorities and time audit. Do you see some problems?

### *Make instant changes*

Observe and note time wasters in your audit. If you're making some major organizational changes, give yourself a "time out" to get started. Alert your coworkers that you need several uninterrupted hours to clear your desk, set up an efficient filing system, and sort through resources.

Start with your desk and devise a system that keeps important papers from getting lost. Initially, make temporary files or use boxes to sort every thing on your desk. Label files Family, Staff, Licensing, Re-

sources, USDA, Garbage or any other obvious category. After your desk is cleared, break down the categories. From the Family file, for example, separate material related to each child and transfer the information to that child's individual folder. These are among your most important documents and should be secure and easy to access.

Gather office supplies in one place, and keep only tape, a stapler, calculator, and paper on your desk. Use a file for phone numbers and keep it near the telephone. Put your computer keyboard out of the way to create more work space. Use a bulletin board to post licensing documents, emergency phone numbers, and your program's evacuation route. All other critical materials belong in the file cabinet.

Sort resources—magazines, clipped articles, books, and computer software disks. Decide whether each should be in the classroom or in the teachers' library, a parents' library, or on a shelf in your office. Organize resources by category or alphabetically. Use an index card file or notebook for tracking borrowed materials. Discard ruthlessly.

Your Personal Life
Because there is more to life than just work, goals and priorities for your work life and your personal life should be in harmony. Try to develop a comprehensive goals blueprint that weaves together both worlds.

### *Systems for staying organized*

Use these eight tips to stay organized and make time work for you — not against you.

❖ **Plan for tomorrow-** Many teachers and directors find that they work most efficiently by planning at

the end of one day for the next. Of course, you will need to build flexibility into the plan, but write down what you want to accomplish and an idea of how long the task will take. Don't over schedule and keep some time for yourself, even if it's 15 minutes for muscle loosening stretches at your desk. Clear your desk and put away supplies before you lock up for the night.

Manage Your Time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine your Goals</li> <li>• Keep track of your time to find exactly where it is going</li> <li>• Organize yourself for minimum stress and maximum productivity</li> </ul>

Procrastination
<p>Overcome This Time Waster With These Tips From Norman Vincent Peale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pick an area where procrastination plagues you — and conquer it.</li> <li>• Learn to set priorities and focus on one problem at a time.</li> <li>• Don't duck the most difficult problems.</li> <li>• Don't let perfectionism paralyze you.</li> </ul>

❖ **Determine your prime time-** Block off the time when you are most energized and creative. Use this time for high priority projects that require thoughtful analysis rather than routine tasks like calling the plumber or repairing a broken wagon. Alert staff and parents that, for example, from 9:00 until 10:30 you will be working on the budget and will answer all but emergency issues afterward.

## ***Sample Filing Categories***

### **Administration**

Bylaws  
Board of Directors  
    General  
    Minutes of meetings  
Legal papers of incorporation or management

### **Community Relations**

Child advocacy issues  
Consultants  
Press releases about program  
Professional organizations  
Sample Brochures

### **Children**

Individual children's files  
    Enrollment forms  
    Application  
    Emergency medical release  
    Health records  
    Immunization record  
    Permissions  
    Tuition agreement form  
Progress forms  
    Accidental report forms  
    Conference and follow-up notes  
    Progress notes  
    Samples of work  
    Skills inventory and observation

### **Enrollment forms - blank-**

Application form  
Acceptance letter  
Calendar - current  
Emergency form  
Health and immunization record form  
Tuition  
    Tuition schedule  
    Tuition. payment agreement form

### **Finances**

Budget  
    Current  
    Prior

Finance forms  
    Purchase order forms  
    Scholarship application forms  
Fund raising  
Grant proposals  
Tax  
    Status returns  
    Withholding statements

### **Insurance**

Claims  
Policies  
    Automobile  
    Disability  
    Health and dental  
    Liability  
    Unemployment compensation

### **Health and safety**

Accident report form  
Communicable disease chart  
Fire drill procedure checklist  
First aid procedures checklist  
Disaster procedure checklist  
Health and safety handouts for parents

### **Nutrition**

Child and Adult Care Food Program  
    Menu's  
    Reimbursement forms  
    Nutrition handouts for parents  
    Nutritious snacks - guidelines

### **Parent Relations**

Classroom observation guidelines  
Departing parents -letter  
Newsletter  
    Ideas  
    Past  
Parent materials  
    Handbook  
    Handouts  
    Orientation  
    Participation guidelines  
    Program evaluation form  
Resources and bibliographies

### **Program**

Management  
    Attendance records  
    Classroom schedules  
    Group. assignments  
    Rotating responsibilities  
    School roster

### **Procedures**

Classroom curriculum  
Classroom procedures  
Field trips  
Special events

### **Space and equipment**

Educational equipment  
    Catalogs  
    Inventory form  
    Maintenance record  
    Warranties  
Keys - check out record  
Janitorial service record  
Office equipment  
    Catalogs  
    Inventory form  
    Maintenance record  
    Warranties

### **Staffing**

Employment forms  
    Application  
    Contract forms  
    Emergency information  
    Evaluation forms  
    Job descriptions  
    Staff policy handbook  
    W-4 withholding form  
Employee files - individual  
    Application/resume/transcript/letters or reference  
    Current contract  
    Emergency information  
    Evaluations  
    Medical evaluation forms  
    Personal, sick leave and vacation records  
    Training records  
Staff roster  
Volunteer and substitute guidelines

❖ **Work for efficiency.** Open mail at the trash can and act. All papers can either be filed immediately, passed on to a more appropriate reader, tagged with a routing slip, or trashed. Routing slips are useful for making sure everyone gets to see catalogs and magazines. put your name at the bottom of the list so you can add the material to the proper resource shelf after everyone sees it.

❖ **Keep a master plan book.** Use a planner for both personal and professional daily to-do lists, weekly tasks, and a yearly calendar. Avoid the temptation of multiple calendars and instead keep all information—family vacations, doctor appointments, pay days, library due dates, and staff meetings—in one place. Add address pages and phone numbers to the planner, as well as a folder to store stamps, business cards, and paper clips. Record mileage and other unreimbursed business expenses and make tax time easier by highlighting these amounts with a yellow marker.

❖ **Temper the telephone.** Alexander Bell gave the world a useful tool -- not a tyrant that interrupts work, concentration, and face-to-face conversation. Be firm with solicitors. Tell callers at the beginning of a conversation what your time constraints are. Try to make routine calls early in the morning. Model the behavior you expect by being courteous and direct. If you use an answering machine, make sure your outgoing message is clear and thorough -- Let callers know when their calls will be returned.

❖ **Organize as you go.** Control files, paper, and other potential clutter day-by-day. Develop an effective file system and use it. Don't let things that are no longer useful accumulate. If it's broken, fix it now; if it can't be fixed or is too old to stimulate children's learning, toss it. Be selective with your storage space. Libraries and common resource areas are more efficient than several personal stash closets. Invest in quality

equipment that won't waste your time and money with repairs and replacement shopping. Target one area to work on at a time — clean that desk drawer — and then keep it tidy. Two minutes spent once a month is a better time investment than two days every two years.

❖ **Learn to delegate.** Effective leaders know how to motivate others to help get work done. Delegating maximizes efficiency and increases the ability to get more done in less time. But it is a demanding skill that requires determination and willingness to let go of the "Super Woman" title. Some tasks are only yours to do—firing an employee or negotiating a rental agreement, for example. No matter how unpleasant they cannot be delegated. However, there are tasks that can be shared with others. This does not mean dumping what you don't want to do but instead, framing tasks to fit the skills of another who wants to assume more responsibility. The art of delegating involves carefully organizing the task, stating your expectations, and providing feedback from a distance. To be successful at delegating, you have to let go. Allow room for mistakes, self-paced work, and creative problem-solving. Be available for check-ins but consistently communicate your trust that the job will be done independently and successfully.

❖ **Avoid procrastination.** If an unpleasant task is the cause of procrastination, promise yourself a reward for getting the job done. Unpleasant tasks seldom disappear and putting them off often worsens the situation. When the size of the task is the cause, break the job down into bite-sized pieces and work for 15 minutes a day to get it done. Set a realistic deadline for completion, decide on a starting action, and enlist the help of a group of people who can each be responsible for one part of the project.

## *Manage That Paper - File It*

Organize your files with key words that guide logically and consistently. See the example of typical child care program filing categories. Use the following guidelines to keep your paperwork under control.

- Label clearly and boldly. Make sure you can read the label without squinting.
- Order files alphabetically. Print or type the headings for each file, put the headings in alphabetical order and use color-coded plastic sleeves. Put the primary tabs -Administration, Community Relations, Children, and so forth in the extreme left slots of hanging folders. Do the same for sub-headings, coding by color and tab placement according to the level of importance.
- Keep a list of your file categories. This back-up will make revisions easier and help you avoid duplicating categories.
- Avoid files labeled "Miscellaneous" or "Other."
- File essential documents that will be useful in the immediate future. Regularly purge the file cabinet and archive or destroy old records as appropriate.