

Workplace Readiness Skill

Professional Competency

Activity Sheet

Skill 11

Efficiency and Productivity

Efficiency and productivity are essential to getting things done at work or at home. As tasks pile up it is easy to become overwhelmed and unsure of where to start first. Efficiency and productivity skills help us to know what needs to get done first and allow us to make a plan on how to get those tasks accomplished.

Description of Efficiency and Productivity

Being efficient and productive means you plan, prioritize, and adapt work goals in order to manage time and resources.

Examples of being efficient and productive:

- Make a grocery list before shopping in order to stick to the budget and get all needed items quickly.
- Create a to-do list of all your work for the day with the most important tasks at the beginning of the list.

Menu of Activities

These activities are designed to help families discuss and practice efficiency and productivity. Choose one or more activities to complete with your child.

Activity 1: Illustrating Prioritizing with a Jar

1. Collect needed supplies: a large jar, rocks, stones, pebbles, sand, or loose dirt.
2. Start with a discussion on efficiency and productivity. Use the definition above and discuss what that means at home and at work.
3. Fill the jar with as many rocks, stones, pebbles and sand as will fit. Fill the jar in any order of materials you wish.
4. Empty the jar and then fill it this time starting the largest rocks. Next, fill it with the next to the largest, and then the next largest and so on.
5. Discuss which method allowed the most material to fill into the jar.
 - The 2nd method of putting in the largest rocks first probably allowed you to fill it with the most materials.
6. Explain: The rocks (due to size) would be like your most important tasks or goals to complete. Then the stones would be the next most important and then gravel, and then sand. If you fill up your time with the least important tasks first (the sand) you will not have space for the most important tasks.

Activity 2: Developing a Daily Schedule

1. Together, think about all the activities your child typically needs and wants to accomplish throughout their day. Examples: morning routines, schoolwork, meals, chores, fun activities like video games or playing basketball.
2. Write or draw these tasks out on a piece of paper. Discuss when these activities need to be completed and which activities are priorities. Example: eating breakfast comes before brushing teeth.
3. Put activities into a daily schedule in order of importance and when tasks need to be accomplished.
 - To create the schedule try: [Done](https://bit.ly/done-app) (bit.ly/done-app), your smartphone's calendar, [printable picture schedules](https://bit.ly/picture_schedules) (bit.ly/picture_schedules), or [Habitica](https://habitica.com) (habitica.com).
4. Set goals within routine that increase efficiency and productivity. Example: I will complete my nightly routine in 30 minutes.
5. At the end of each day, talk about what went well and what could be improved the next day.

Activity 3: Distractions and Efficiency

1. Set up a task for your child that involves repeatedly building as many as possible of something simple (for example, a small Lego tower, sticking pipe cleaners into styrofoam balls, connecting as many paper-clips as possible, etc.). Ask them to do it with no other rules, and see how many they can make in a minute or two.
2. Progressively add rules to make the task harder (like, clap twice between each completed build, sing a song while building, do it standing on one leg, wear thick gloves, etc.).
3. Compare the amounts produced from doing it *efficiently* to doing it *inefficiently*. Which was more productive and why?

Reflection

Review the questions with your child and respond together after completing the activities.

- Did this information help your family better understand how to demonstrate efficiency and productivity?
- Did you find practicing this skill difficult or easy and why?
- Why is this skill important to use at home and at work?
- How do we continue to practice this skill in the home and in the community?
- What additional information or resources do I need to continue reinforcing this skill?