

Speech and Language Therapy Blog

Supporting time telling and time management skills at Secondary School

Time telling skills in secondary school:

Telling the time is no doubt a very important skill. However, it is a skill we often take for granted, and that might be overlooked in secondary school education. Time telling skills are crucial for success at secondary school as they are central to the planning and organisation of prep work, exam revision and coursework. In fact, the ability to read and manage time is vital skill which allows a young person to develop independence.

With so many of our secondary school aged pupils now owning a mobile phone it's apparent that reading the digital time is something that they may be having some practice with. However, what happens when their phone battery dies or they lose their phone? what happens if they're in an exam or classroom where they don't have access to their phone? Are they able to read an analogue clock?

How we support pupils at Mary Hare:

One of the speech therapy groups that we run for pupils in year 7 is around developing their time telling skills. Even though this is a group we run with our lower year groups, it is something that should be promoted from year 7 through to the sixth form.

We often find that within one class there is a huge difference in each pupil's ability to tell the time. Time telling skills are not always linked to intellectual levels, every pupils is unique. Some pupils may have learnt basic skills in primary school or from parents/carers, but others find reading an analogue clock very challenging and have had very limited chance to practice.

How you can help:








On the next page there are some tips and suggested activities that you may wish to try with your son/daughter at home to support their learning. They have been broken up into a 'beginners' section and an 'advanced' section to give examples of how every young person can be supported at home regardless of their current ability.









Helpful tips and advice:



For beginners:

-  Encourage your child to wear a watch to school.
-  Make a habit of asking them for the time to give them opportunity to practice.
-  Expose them to lots of temporal concepts in your language, for example, 'before', 'after', 'earlier', 'later', 'next', 'first', 'after'. This can be done during everyday activities such as making dinner, building something, explaining the rules of a game.
-  Make a habit of pointing out how long things take in everyday life such as cleaning your teeth, eating breakfast, or how long until you need to leave the house.
-  Let your son/daughter remind you when it's time to do something, they may be more motivated to do so if it's something that they're looking forward to.
-  If you want to complete analogue time telling practice at home its sometimes useful to use a real clock (you may wish to remove the batteries first so that you can control the hands).
-  Counting is essential for time telling – the more comfortable your child is with counting 1-60 and the 5 times table, the easier time telling will become.

For more advanced learners:

-  Ask them how long until the next programme is on TV, or how long the programme has been on for.
-  Encourage them to look at a bus/train timetable and work out how long the next bus/train will be; how long the journey will take or how frequent the transport is.
-  If you're planning a day out or holiday, why not allow the young person to help create an itinerary, encourage them to considerations for transport times etc.
-  See if they able to independently follow cooking instructions/times, i.e. in making a cake.
-  Give them specific instructions to meet you at a certain time and reward punctuality.
-  Encourage them to use techniques to manage their time wisely around exams i.e. by creating a revision timetable.

If you have any concerns or queries regarding your son/daughter's time telling skills, or any other areas of their speech, language or communication, please contact the speech therapy department.