

How and when to use a timer

1. Using a timer sets the expectation for the student that he/she will be working for a designated time. It provides a start and an end point and increases the productivity of the activity or task.
2. Designate a specific place in the home to place the timer so your student can see it. This allows him/her to know how much time is left to transition to next activity. It is recommended the timer have an audio sound indicating it is time to transition to the next lesson/activity.
3. Allow your student to start and stop the timer. This allows him/her to take ownership of his/her behavior and increases the chances of a positive transition to the next lesson/activity.
4. Using a First/Then board with a timer: When the timer sounds indicating it is time to transition to the next activity/lesson, provide your student with the timer and allow him/her to turn it off. Then show your student the First/Then board and provide a verbal prompt such as "First, put the blocks in the bucket. Then you get the iPad." Using the First/Then statement allows the student to comprehend completing one task is dependent on gaining access to the next item/activity.
5. It is recommended to provide positive verbal reinforcement when your student uses the timer correctly and transitions to the next activity/lesson. You can say things like...
 - "I like the way you used your timer to do your work."
 - "Good job starting and stopping your timer."
 - "You did a great job looking at your timer to do your work."
6. How long should your student stay on task? Every student learns at a different rate and can stay on task for different amounts of time. It is recommended to break up learning into small segments followed by a preferred item or activity. Some students can stay on task for just a couple of minutes to 20 or more minutes. Some studies state 1 minute for every year of the student's age. For example, a 4 year old has the potential to stay on task for 4 minutes. A 10 year old has the potential to stay on task for 10 min.

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7. Using a timer for non-academic activities in the home environment creates structure and sets expectations. It allows the student to comprehend access to certain items and time spent on certain activities are limited. Following the same protocol of using a First/Then board accompanied with a verbal prompt allows the student to generalize a timer is utilized in creating structure.
8. It is important to time yourself. We as parents and educators have so much advice and information we can go on forever. In doing so, your student can lose interest in the transition and may engage in undesired behavior. Therefore, it is important to state short directives and allow your student to transition and engage in the lesson/activity.

Timer Downloads

<https://www.online-stopwatch.com/>

<https://www.online-stopwatch.com/classroom-timers/>

<https://www.visnos.com/demos/classroom-timer>

<https://www.classtools.net/timer/>