



Habit Three: Put First Things First

Put First Things First means to decide what is most important and then take care of that first. Thinking about what needs to be done tomorrow or by the end of the week can be overwhelming, especially for children. Learning to think of which things are the most important and taking care of them first allows children and adults to be less stressed.

Activities to Try at Home:

1. Make a list of things your child needs to accomplish throughout a week. Together, rank the tasks in importance. Then rewrite the list in order of importance. Use a planner or calendar to schedule time so that the important things are done first.
2. Role play with your child about the consequences of forgetting to study for a science test. How will your child feel? What are the consequences? Then role-play how it will feel to be well prepared and get a great science score!
3. Brainstorm with your child about something that they have been putting off for a long time, like cleaning up their room or writing a thank you note for a gift. Go and do the task together.
4. Check out some of the following picture books at the library to use as a springboard for discussion about "putting first things first."
 - a. *The Little Red Hen*—The Little Red Hen found wheat seeds and wanted help to plant them. No one would help, so the Little Red Hen planted, watered, and weeded the plants by herself. The Little Red Hen put first things first and enjoyed the results.
 - b. *The Carrot Seed* by Ruth Krauss—A little boy practices putting first things first when he plants his carrot seed, waiting patiently and tending to it, even while others tell him it won't come up. He is rewarded with a prize winning carrot.
 - c. *Clean Your Room, Harvey Moon* by Pat Cummings—Harvey chooses not to put first things first, and watches tv instead of cleaning his room. Harvey's mom helps him practice the skill of putting first things first.

