

**Dr. Kay, my daughter's had so much stress. She comes home from school and tries to get everything done, but seems to get more frustrated each day. Is this what I can expect until graduation?**

- Peter M.

Young people appear to thrive on constant change and excitement, but most appreciate a set schedule more than even they realize. Anyone can make great progress toward goals by following a schedule. To start, have your daughter choose her three most important goals. Discuss how many hours per day or per week it would take for her to accomplish them. Figure out a time that fits the family's schedule. When she's working on that task, she needs to give 100% concentration to finishing it, without outside distractors. Think about how schools are set up. Bells tell students exactly what they are supposed to concentrate on at any given time. Then the bell rings again and they have time to move to the next event, socialize, or check their cell phones. Then another bell rings and they are supposed to give 100% effort on another task. You may not need bells ringing at your home, but a timer helps a violist know how long she needs to practice.

### **Stress Buster**

The greatest advantage of a schedule is stress reduction. If your daughter knows that in one hour, she'll get a break and can play on the computer, her stress will decrease and she can focus on the task she's trying to accomplish. Have her schedule time to relax. High stress levels have devastating consequences, such as depression or anxiety. If your daughter feels like her life is all work and no play, stress might cause major health problems. Figure out how she likes to relax, watch TV, work-out in the gym, or listen to music. Have her "reward" her productive time with these activities.

### **No More Multitasking**

Many people think they can multitask, but studies show 98% of people can't. Most people multitasking are simply dividing their limited attention. Instead of doing one thing great, they're doing many things poorly. When it comes time for homework, family meals, and bed, have her turn off her cell phone. When she's studying or doing homework, limit her distractions. When she has a lot to accomplish, have her write down what has to get done and number them in order of importance. This will help reduce the stress, because she won't struggle to remember everything that has to get done and she'll track the deadlines. Encourage her to tackle tasks with the greatest impact on her goals. Then, with full concentration, complete each task. If something pops up that will require only a few minutes to complete, have her get it done. If it's going to take longer, add it to her list and set a priority next to it.

### **Night Time**

A few minutes before you go to bed, talk about what she accomplished for the day and what needs to get done tomorrow. This will allow her brain to relax as she rests, instead of worrying. Schedule enough sleep. Rest helps the body cope. Have a set time to wake up on a school day and another set time to wake up on a weekend. If she goes to bed

too late on Saturday night, she won't be able to easily fall asleep on Sunday night and will ruin her schedule for Monday.

**If you have a question about your child's attendance at school, feel that your child refuses to go to school, or have a question about your child's education, you can Email Dr. Kay at [DrJimK@yahoo.com](mailto:DrJimK@yahoo.com) and your question with his answer may be published in this magazine.**