



BRINGING OUT THE BEST

TIPS FOR USING ● THE SAND TIMER

A sand timer can be a great tool for parents and teachers of young children. It provides a visual representation of time that children can understand. They can SEE the passage of time as the sand falls from the top to the bottom.

Set clear expectations for using the sand timer. Tell the child or children that the sand timer is not a toy for children...it is a tool for adults. Children may look, but not touch. Store it in a high place where children cannot reach it. The sand timer also takes the pressure off the adult (the timer says it time to turn off the tablet VS the parent or teacher saying it time to turn off the tablet).

1. **Transitions** – Many children have a hard time with transitions. Use the sand timer to warn the child or children that one activity is getting ready to end and another one is beginning. This technique gives children a warning that a change is getting ready to happen.

Examples:

- **Home** – “Bella, when all of the sand goes to the bottom, it will be time to turn off the TV and get ready for bed.
- **School** – “Friends, I’m going to set the sand timer now. When all of the sand goes to the bottom, free play will be over and it will be time to clean up”.

2. **Taking Turns** – The sand timer can be used for turn taking. This is especially helpful when you see that 2 children are arguing over the same toy.

Examples:

- **Home or School** – “Lamar, it looks like you and Latoya both want to play with the dump truck. I am going to set the sand timer. You play with it first and then when all of the sand goes to the bottom, it will be Latoya’s turn”.

3. **Time Away** – When children hit or push a peer or family member, they often need to be removed from the situation in order to regroup. Removing a child from an activity is also a good way to communicate that there is a consequence for negative actions (hitting=sitting out).

Examples:

- **Home or School** – “Raelyn, hitting is not okay. You will have to sit here until all the sand goes to the bottom. If your body is calm, I will let you join in the game again”.
- **If the child is still upset at the end of the timer** – “Juan, your body is not calm. I am going to set the sand timer again”.