Introduction
The roles and responsibilities of educators working in education and care services seems to be increasing daily. There are learning frameworks to engage with, national regulations and assessment criteria to unpack and understand. Educators are feeling time poor!

Time to Think
To be more time efficient, people need to think about what it is they wish to achieve with their time. Reflecting upon the bigger picture/vision assists staff to prioritise what is important, what could be delegated, and what can wait for another time. Too often we get caught up in the business of the day and forget about the vision we had for our service/program. Taking time to think is one of the most important time management techniques.

**HINT:** Schedule thinking time in your diary at least monthly!

Refer to the NQF Reflection Tool in this series.

Time to Plan
Allocate time in your schedule to make daily lists and refer to yearly planners to ensure tasks are diarised. This assists time frames being adhered to and progress towards goals being made. Lists order your thoughts and often alleviate stress as people feel they are working towards their large list of duties and have some sense of control.

**HINT:** Ensure you transfer incomplete tasks to the next day’s list so that they are not forgotten!

Time to Do
Often our lists are long and rarely completed. It is essential to prioritise the most important tasks to ensure you can allocate quality time to achieve quality results. In addition break large tasks into small ones so that you can feel achievement in completing things.
off your list. The more you do, the more successful you will feel. Make sure you work out what are non-essential tasks and say ‘no’ to them. Don’t spend 80% of your time completing tasks that are worth 20% – it should be the other way around!

**HINT:** Ever heard the saying “Eat your frog in the morning?”

Make sure you complete the most dreaded and complicated task first and tick it off early. This will decrease opportunities for procrastination and make you feel a sense of achievement once that frog is gone!

**Time to Review**

It’s important to evaluate how you spend your time in order to maximise your efficiency.

When are you most efficient at getting tasks done?

What are your time robbers eg. emails, phone calls, lack of motivation etc and how can you eliminate these?

Are there periods of time eg. waiting for appointments, that could be better utilised?

**HINT:** Don’t forget to celebrate your achievements and take a break. A fresh and revitalised mind works more efficiently than a tired and stressed one!

**Delegation**

The NQF promotes a whole team approach. All educators are expected to be involved in all stages of the assessment and rating process, therefore delegation of tasks is not only time efficient but necessary.

www.businessballs.com/delegation.htm have some good suggestions. Among them are:

- Define the task and decide on the appropriate person/team.
- Assess training needs [Do they have the skills to carry out the task?].
- Explain reasons for the task and state desired result.
- Consider what will be required to get the task done.
- Come to a mutual deadline.
- Work together with person/team.
- Provide feedback to person/team.

Delegation is not about off-loading tasks and leaving people to their own devices. With careful planning, support, and guidance delegation is an effective tool in allowing individuals and teams to grow and achieve their goals.
Handy Time Tips

In Avoiding Burnout. Strategies for Managing Time, Space, and People in Early Childhood Education, Paula Jorde Bloom suggests the following strategies:

- **Group and consolidate activities** – Each time we shift to a new activity our mind must shift too. Doing like tasks together helps make our day seem less frantic and fragmented eg. make phone calls in one period, do emails in blocks of time.

- **Get a good start** – Being relaxed at the start of the morning should carry through the day. Plan for the next day the night before.

- **Develop routines** – Regularity in routines cuts down on indecision and helps establish habits and prepare people.

- **Avoid congestion** – Crowds, lines, traffic can be eliminated with forethought and planning. Use internet banking, buy stamps/items in bulk to save lining up, plan trips (within reason) pre or post peak times. Use this time for better things.

- **Take advantage of your mood** – Use your ‘high’ and ‘low’ times smarter.

- **Be a wait-watcher** – Ensure you always have reading or small tasks available to do while you wait between appointments.

- **Become a speed reader** – Try and read for key ideas and the main point of an article. Skim contents tables for important chapters. If the article contains lots of valuable information then go back to it. This may help filter some of your reading load.

- **Eliminate when possible** – Continually review what is important and essential and try and eliminate unnecessary tasks and duties.