

## CHAPTER TWO

### *Calendars: The Foundation of Planning*

#### *Calendar introduction*

Calendar management is one of the most powerful smartphone tools for independent living. Knowing what to do and when to do it takes a lot of memory stress away, and managing time is a valuable life skill. The Calendar is where healthy and helpful habits are born and grow.

It can be especially hard for some Explorers on the autism spectrum to plan the future; working on a Calendar together can be a good way to build skills. Special Hockey games, doctor's appointments, birthdays, work schedules, study schedules, screen break times, family outings, dates, holidays — it all starts with the Calendar.

The great advantage of the iPhone Calendar is that a Guide can edit an Explorer's Calendar using Chrome or another web browser, including setting notifications for Calendar events. The Guide doesn't need to touch the Explorer's smartphone. This is possible because the iPhone Calendar is "synchronized" with Apple's iCloud Calendar. The iCloud Calendar can be managed by a web browser, and those changes quickly show up on an Explorer's phone. There's not much setup needed, the iCloud Calendar is created when a smartphone is first used.

With a Guide managed Calendar an Explorer is reminded of events and learns the habit of looking one day ahead. Some Explorers hate surprises, for them a Calendar can be a big stress reducer. If your Explorer works with an aide, they can receive invitations to important events, or even see a shared Calendar.<sup>1</sup> Explorers may rarely create Calendar events, but most who are able to read at 2<sup>nd</sup> grade level will come to rely on an actively managed smartphone Calendar.

iCloud Calendars can be shared<sup>2</sup>, so a Guide can view an Explorer's Calendar overlaid on their own. This is very useful for planning appointments and events.

#### *Calendar: support independence and personal growth*

The iPhone Calendar, including Event notifications, is a powerful tool for

independence and personal growth. You and your Explorer can use the Calendar to practice planning and thinking about the future, to create new healthy habits and routines, to manage unwanted behaviors, and to coordinate resources.

The first step towards these benefits is to reward use of the Calendar. To begin with there needs to be something to see! A Guide needs to setup work hours, outings and events, and routines.

Once there's a something to look at the "Guide's Toolbox" chapter describes a general approach to learning smartphone skills. In addition to those techniques a Guide can respond to most "when" questions by asking an Explorer to access and review their Calendar. Some Explorers may appreciate a reward for the first few weeks of routine daily review of the next day's Calendar. The reward will vary by Explorer and range from token-based rewards to verbal support and encouragement.

While many Explorers find a planned routine comforting, others may be stressed by the external structure. A Guide may need a mixture of patience, reward, support, persistence, strategic retreat, reframing, and the like.

Once a base Calendar is in place it can be used to support growth and independence. Event notifications are particularly useful. A notification is something that grabs a user's attention, typically it combines a "pop up" or alert message and a brief tone or sound. Any Event can have at least one notification, which may be set to minutes, hours, or days ahead depending on the smartphone Calendar app. With notifications set a daily exercise walk can have its own reminder. Similar Calendar Events and reminders can be created for medication administration, doctor appointments, weekly calendar reviews, birthdays, and bill or rent payments. Some Explorers may begin adding their own Events to their Calendar, a weekly calendar review is a good way to promote that skill.

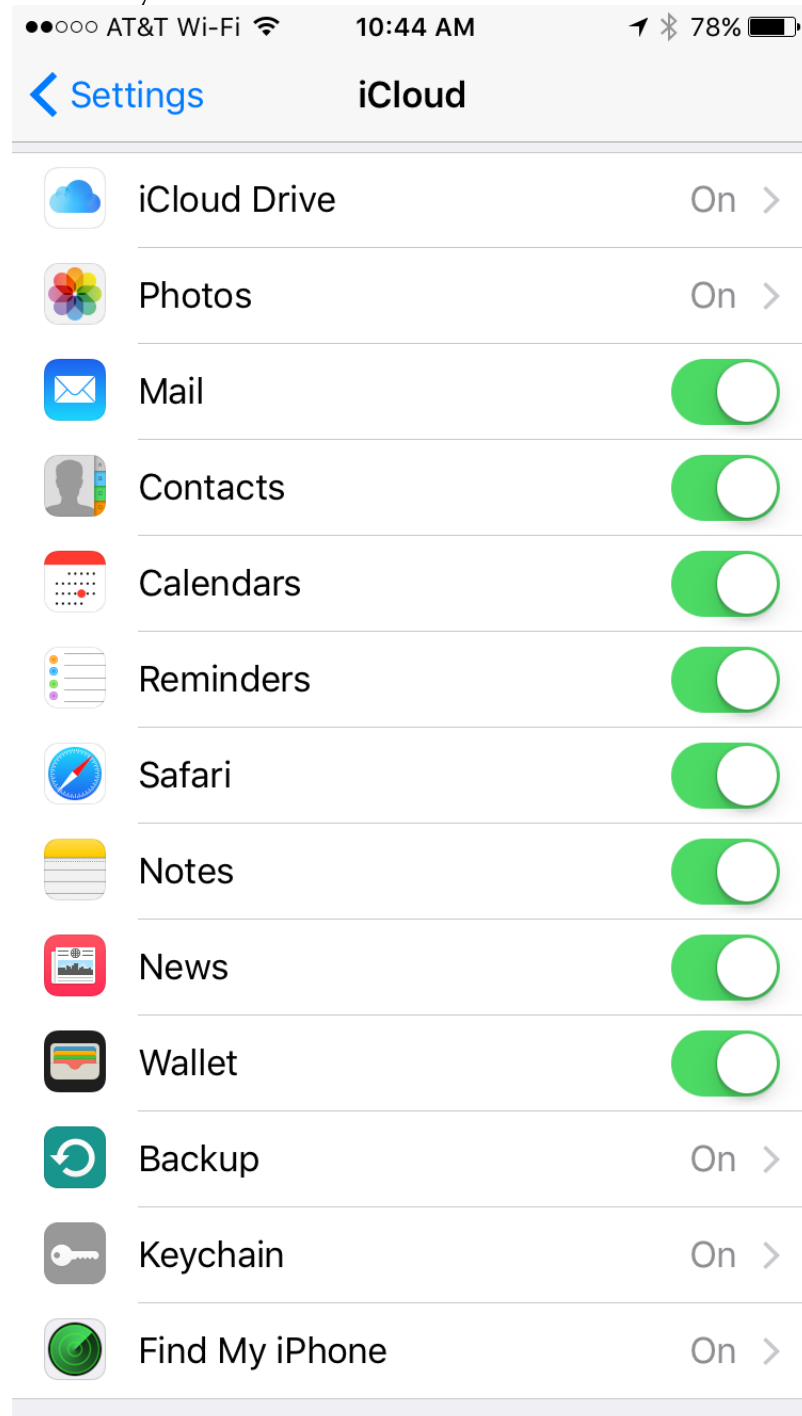
With experience both Explorer and Guide will identify new ways to leverage a Calendar. For example, an Explorer may be working on an undesired habit or behavior. A daily Event with a notification can then ask the Explorer to send a text message or email with a progress report; the Calendar can then support "one day at a time" behavior changes.

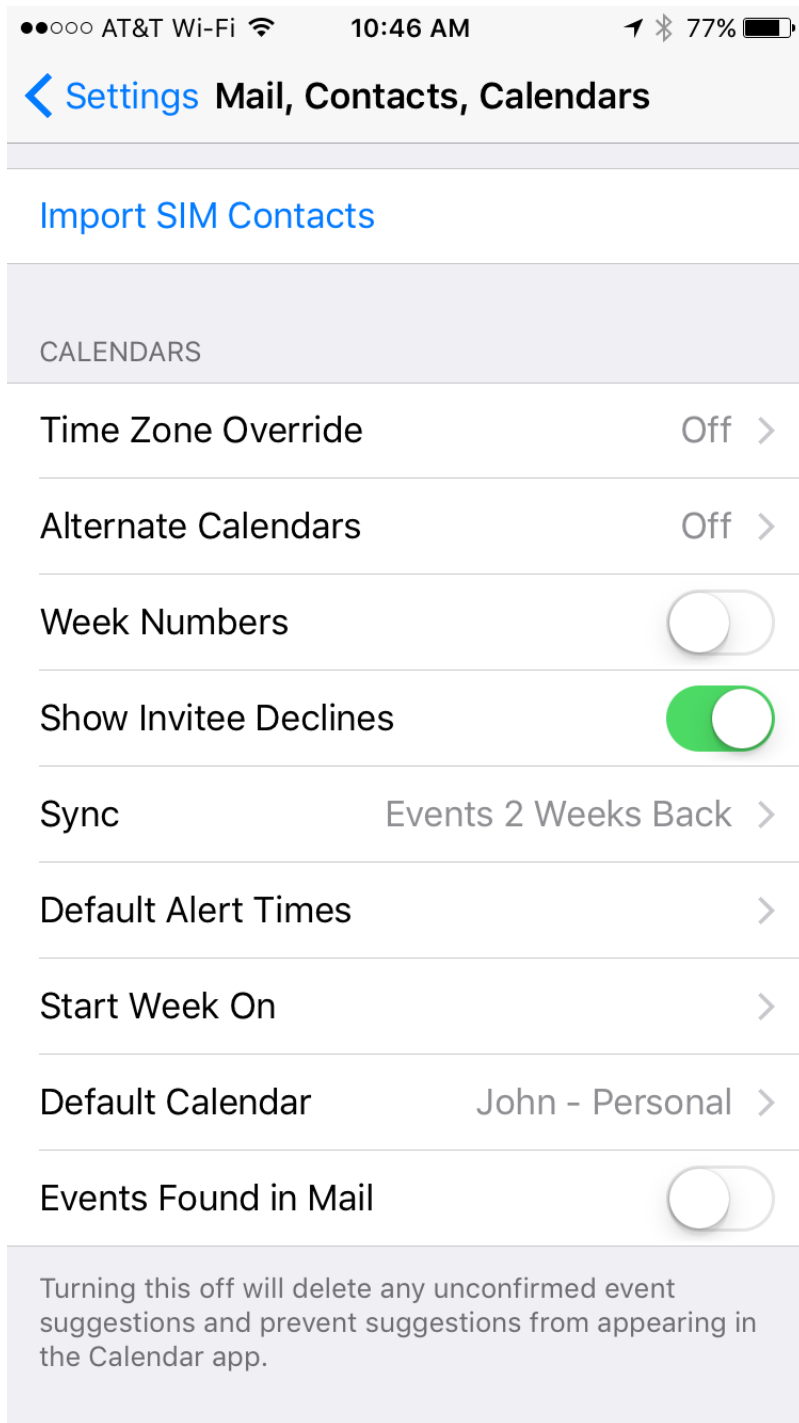
### ***Setting up an iPhone Calendar.***

Apple built its iPhone Calendar.app to work with several kinds of online calendar services, but most Guides and Explorers should stay with Apple's iCloud for Calendaring, Contacts and Email. This makes setup simple and you can get support and training from your local Apple Store ([www.apple.com/retail/personalsetup](http://www.apple.com/retail/personalsetup)). You can use Apple's user guide and related books. (See: Learning the basics: User guides for iPhone and Android.)

When an iPhone is configured for iCloud use, including iCloud Calendaring, the

Apple Settings should look something like the images below. The actual appearance is likely to change over time as Apple introduces new features, this image is current as of May 2016.





I recommend turning off the “Events Found in Mail” feature. It tries to use email information to automatically create appointments but it can create misleading appointments.

Once an iCloud Calendar is setup a Guide can use the Explorer’s iCloud credentials to manage the Explorer’s iCloud Calendar. The Guide can create Events and Alerts for the Explorer. Changes made to the iCloud Calendar will quickly appear on the Explorer’s iPhone.

There are a two other Calendaring features a Guide may want to take advantage of: sending invitations and seeing multiple calendars display together. These are “nice to have” features so they are best introduced after basic calendaring is working well. These features only work reliably if everyone involved is using Apple’s iCloud calendars and iCloud email.

Invitations are a real time saver. If two people are attending the same event there’s no need to create the same Event on two calendars. Instead one person creates an Event and “invites” the other to participate. If the invitation is accepted the Event appears on the guest’s calendar. If the host changes the Event time the guest’s Event will be updated too (the update may take a few minutes). I recommend only using invitations with iCloud email addresses, invitations may not be received if they are sent to a non-iCloud email<sup>3</sup>.

I suggest using invitations with caution. Even when they work iCloud invitations may be confusing for Explorers. An Explorer may be puzzled by a Notification alert. The best way to handle a meeting shared between Guide and Explorer is for the Guide to borrow the Explorer’s identity and, using Chrome, create the Event with the Explorer as host. Then the Guide can add an invitation that goes from the Explorer to the Guide’s own iCloud Calendar where it is accepted. It sounds complicated, but it’s actually pretty simple to do.

Calendar sharing is another nice to have feature. It lets a user see multiple calendars at the same time. Apple makes this automatic for family members if you set up “Family Sharing”. This image shows how shared calendars look when viewed in a Guide’s web browser:

The screenshot shows the iCloud Calendar web interface for John on Monday, June 6, 2016. The interface includes a sidebar with three shared calendars: Guide (purple dot), Family (yellow dot), and Explorer (red dot). The main calendar view displays three events: 'Special Hockey Game' (2 PM to 3 PM), 'Guide Event' (2:45 PM to 3:15 PM), and 'Explorer Event' (3 PM to 3:30 PM). A calendar grid on the right shows the date June 6 highlighted in red. The bottom navigation bar includes an 'Edit' button, 'Go to today', and view options for Day, Week, and Month.

Calendar sharing is a useful feature for a Guide who may have to coordinate multiple calendars. When a Calendar is shared the recipient can edit it too. A

Guide will often find it useful to log-in as the Explorer, then share the primary calendar with the Guide's account. That way that the Explorer's Calendar can be updated without the Guide needing to switch to the Explorer's account.

Calendar sharing can be confusing though. Some Explorer's will want to see other people's Calendars, others don't want the distractions. Many Guides will want to learn Calendar Sharing and use the "overlay" view to coordinate schedules, but it's a feature that is best introduced after an Explorer is comfortable with basic calendaring.

There are some calendar "shares" (overlay calendars) that may be setup automatically. I mentioned that if a Guide setups up Apple's "Family Sharing" service they'll see a Family Calendar. The User Guide explains how to hide this. Birthday information entered in Contacts will show up in the Calendar as Events. These are easy to hide but can be convenient.

Two other calendar shares are a bit more mysterious and it can only be seen on the iPhone's built-in Calendar.app. They can't be seen by a Guide using a web browser.

One is US Holidays. Everyone sees this, it can be shown or hidden by tapping the "Calendars" button within Apple's Calendar.app (see User Guide).

The other calendar share is available if a Guide configures Facebook on the Explorer's iPhone (see Facebook). Calendar.app will automatically include a new "Facebook Calendar". Any Events the Explorer selects will appear on their iPhone. This can be convenient, but the Guide won't see these Facebook Events; they don't appear in the the iCloud web calendar a Guide uses. A Guide may want to turn this off — at least at first. Like US Holidays it can be shown or hidden by tapping the "Calendars" button within Apple's Calendar.app (see User Guide).

### ***The Google Calendar option for an iPhone Explorer***

The Guide's job is complicated enough if Guide and Explorer stick with Apple's Apps and Apple's iCloud services. That's why in this book I almost always limit my recommendations to the Apple world. That's usually not too bad a restriction. Apple's solutions are often quite good.

There are exceptions to this rule however. In the Mobility chapter I discuss Google Maps as an alternative to Apple Maps. Calendars are another exception. Apple's Calendar can do a lot, but Google's Calendar does more.

Google's Calendar does a good job with sharing Calendars, viewing public Calendars, sending and receiving invitations with both Google and Microsoft Calendars, and overlaying multiple color-coded Calendars to help with complex schedules. Many schools use Google Calendars, even schools that have iPads. Google Calendars also work well with business Calendars like Microsoft Outlook.

Many Guides may use Google Calendar. If a Guide needs to coordinate their

Calendar with an Explorer it's hard for the Guide to use iCloud Calendar — and switching is usually not an option.

The good news is that an iPhone works well with Google Calendar. If an Explorer's iPhone is configured to use Google Calendar instead of iCloud Calendar the Explorer probably won't notice the difference. Google's web interface is much more complex than the Apple iCloud Calendar interface, but the Explorer doesn't see that and in this case the Guide will be familiar with it.

To use Google Calendar with an Explorer iPhone the Explorer will need a Google account. I recommend keeping that account separate from the Explorer account; get a new Gmail email address rather than use the Explorer's iCloud email. That email address can be set up to forward to a Guide's email or to the email account a Guide controls on behalf of an Explorer<sup>4</sup>.

I recommend avoiding two-factor authentication on this Google account because it makes Guide management of Explorer data more difficult.

Google Account information is entered in the Explorer's iPhone Settings; in particular the password will be stored on the Explorer's iPhone, the Explorer doesn't need to know it. I recommend configuring account settings to only support Google Calendar synchronization, not Mail or Notes or Contacts. Similarly leave most iCloud services on, but disable iCloud Calendar.

With Google Calendar multiple Google Calendar subscriptions can appear up on an Explorer's iPhone. My family has done this for years and my Explorers have done well with it. It's beyond the scope of this book however so I'll leave that to the technically inclined Guide<sup>5</sup>.

Lastly there are several third party products that support Google Calendar on an iPhone including Fantastical.app, Google's own Google Calendar.app, and Readdle's Calendars 5.app. I think for most Explorers the native iOS app is the best choice even for use of Google's Calendars. It has the best Siri and system support and is probably the easiest to learn and use. If you need an Explorer's Calendar to show multiple Google calendars I think Calendars 5.app may be the best Explorer choice.

### ***Calendaring: Key Points***

- The Calendar is a key tool to help Explorers learn and practice the fundamental life skill of planning.
- iPhone Cloud calendars are a huge improvement over paper calendars for all Explorers. They can be managed by Guides and they support sharing and alerts. They are always at hand. Explorers will lose paper calendars, but few will lose their iPhones.
- To support an Explorer's use of a Calendar a Guide needs to use an iPhone Calendar themselves. They need to demonstrate use.

- When an Explorer asks when an event is, there's always one answer - "It's on your calendar".
- Explorers can start with a simple Calendar managed by a Guide with event alerts. In time most will learn to add events, to work with Family Calendar Sharing (or the non-family equivalent), and to manage invitations.
- There is a longstanding and complicated Apple bug with Calendar invitations. If you send an iPhone calendar invitation to someone and they don't get it you've run into the bug. There's nothing you can do, Apple has to fix this. It's just useful to know the bug exists. With luck you'll never see it.
- It's possible to substitute Google's Calendar for Apple's iCloud Calendar and still use the base iPhone Calendar.app. This can be a good option for a Guide who is invested in Google Calendar but it's technically trickier.

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<sup>1</sup> For various reasons this is a bit harder to do with Apple's iCloud Calendar than with Google's Calendar. I'll discuss the Google advantage later in this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> iCloud Family Sharing makes this kind of calendar sharing relatively easy for members of the same iCloud "Family".

<sup>3</sup> This has been an Apple bug since 2011. It's a complicated bug, but Apple certainly understands it. It makes sending invitations from iCloud less useful than it should be. For details, see <http://tech.kateva.org/2017/10/icloud-invitations-to-non-icloud.html>

<sup>4</sup> Things can get complicated here! Since this option is for more technically inclined Guides I'm not going into much detail. In an earlier chapter I recommended every Explorer have an email address that's managed by a Guide on their behalf. This Google Mail (gmail) address can serve that purpose, or it can forward to that email or it can forward to the Guide's email. If an Explorer is independent then it will forward to the Explorer's iCloud.

<sup>5</sup> Hint: Study this painful article: "Sync Calendar with a phone or tablet" (<https://support.google.com/calendar/answer/99358>).

In iPhone Calendar.app tap Calendars link to see all available calendars. Also check the default calendar for new Events is the Explorer's personal Calendar.

Or consider using a 3rd party solution.