



Helping Children Stay Organized at Home – Home Visuals

Independence is a goal all parents have for their child. This article addresses ways to help children independently organize items, help with chores, and follow a routine, through visuals.

- 1. Use Defined Containers** - Toothbrush holders, toy boxes, and hampers are examples of containers designed for a specific purpose. These containers allow for broad organization concepts such as knowing dirty clothes belong in a hamper. Some items such as silverware holders can be purchased with additional details. Select models that clearly define where materials belong. For example, silverware holders with locations for spoons, forks, and knives help children sort silverware correctly.
- 2. Give Containers a Purpose** – Baskets, plastic containers, and decorative fabric bags can be used to hold a variety of objects. Place containers in a specific location for a specific purpose. This will remind children to complete tasks. For example, a basket in the entryway can remind children to take off their shoes and put them in a specific location.
- 3. Create Jigs** – If containers are not clearly defining a space, or children are having trouble recognizing what goes in a location, create an outline or a ‘jig’ of the object. Put the jig in the location where the item should go. For example, use outlines of a plate and silverware on placements so children learn to set the table.
- 4. Use Photographs, Drawings, or Words** - Another way to clarify where objects belong is to use photographs, drawings, or words depending on the child’s level. Use digital pictures, online images, or drawings to create visuals. For example, use drawings of food and water to indicate where the dog’s food and water bowls belong and to help children complete their chores independently.
- 5. Set Timers** - Timers are a simple way for children to understand how long they have before they finish an activity and start a new one. Whether using a timer with sand, a dial, or digital numbers, children have a clear understanding of how much time is left. Dial and digital timers also have bells which serve as an auditory reminder for children.
- 6. Create Schedules** – Understanding the sequence of steps for after school, bed time, and other routines can be difficult for many children. A photograph, drawing, or word schedule showing the steps is a helpful way to indicate expectations and maintain a consistent routine. Schedules help children become more independent through decreased verbal prompts.
- 7. Use Colors or Drawings on Items** – For children who are working on skills, but have trouble with specific aspects of a task, use guides such as color coding or drawn visuals to help them complete the skill independently. For example, a laminated circle with red on one side and green on the other that can be velcroed to the dishwasher to show children if the dishes are dirty or clean. Another example is an arrow on a clear watering can to indicate how high to fill it.

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