



Strategies for Helping Kids Get Organized

As adults, we use strategies to organize our lives. We put papers in color-coded folders, use shoe racks, and schedule appointments with PDA's, calendars, and lists to organize our environments. Providing children with similar strategies helps them organize their environments and promotes independence. Although we try and help kids organize by reminding them to put their things away, many children often need examples and support to succeed at organizing their lives. Below are a few tips for helping kids take their organization to the next level.

1. Toys – Use pictures or drawings of items to remind children where things belong. Cut pictures from the newspaper or use a picture from the toy's box. Tape images on shelves and in toy boxes so children clearly know where toys belong. Pictures and labels also can be used outside totes and bins to indicate where animals, art supplies, or other small toys belong.



Pictures



Organized Materials

2. Shoes – Provide a mat, box, or shelf for shoes. If kids remove their shoes in the entranceway, be sure to place the box or mat immediately inside or outside the door. If people wear shoes in the home, be sure to have the box, shelf, or mat located in the child's room in an easy to access location.

3. Bathroom – Use toothbrush, soap, cup, and toothpaste holders to provide a natural reminder where things belong. Towels should be housed on a towel rod or ring so children know where to return them when they finish drying their hands and face. All areas should be accessible when the child is standing on the floor or on a step stool so they can be responsible for putting their own items away.

4. Desk – Create a jig or outline of the location where each object belongs. Place outlines on the top of the desk and in the desk draws to let children know where to find and return their notebooks, pencils, crayons, and other school materials. Clearly defining areas is important for kids to independently locate and return writing and working materials.

5. Book Bag – Give children the resources they need to organize their papers, pencils, and other school supplies. Folders are a way to keep papers sorted by subject. Be sure to use folders with pockets that are secure and provide enough space for necessary pages. Label notebooks and use different color books for different subjects. For pencils, erasers, and pens select a bag with pockets for these items or purchase a pencil holder. Make a weekly routine of removing any unnecessary papers and materials from the book bag so children can stay organized and find their important materials.

6. Clothes – Drawers should be easy to open and closets should have hangers and shelving children can reach easily. As with toys, children can benefit from a picture, drawing, or words indicating where clothes belong. Provide enough hangers and shelving so clothes fit neatly in the closet or drawers. Dirty clothing should be put in a convenient place. Be sure hampers are near areas where the children remove their clothes. If children change in the bedroom and in the bathroom, place hampers in both locations.

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