

Organization

Have you ever put something down and then thought where did I put that? Alternatively, have you ever put something in a “special” place so you would know exactly where to look, only to realize that you could not remember where that special place was!

We are all guilty of multi-tasking and sometimes moving so fast that all of our brain functions are not always operating at the same level, but that is life. Life moves fast, our kids and families move fast, and things are ever changing. We try to keep up with the changes. This can be a very difficult and trying task at times. I have no doubt that right now, is one of those times.

Becoming organized is one way to help calm life down when things get overwhelming. Knowing where your car keys or wallet are each morning takes a lot of stress out of getting ready and out the door, especially when you have to get your kids out of the house too!

When trying to be organized, it is not just about each item having its own space, but it is also about making sure it makes sense to you and those who use the same items on a regular basis. For example, keeping the glass cabinet near the refrigerator or sink in the kitchen may make more sense for getting a drink but maybe it is far away from the dishwasher if you have one. You have to decide what works best for you and your family. Not all organization techniques are going to work for everyone all the time.

Personally, I love to organize. It makes me feel accomplished and calm, however, in order to organize; I make a lot of destruction first because I have to wrap my brain around where I want items and where it makes the most sense in my mind. It is a time consuming activity.

As adults, we have developed different strategies or ways to handle our organization techniques, even those that are nonexistent, but not all kids are able to do this without having it modeled first or taught directly. One of the first ways we as adults can help is to set up a routine. When kids know and understand the routine, they are able to be responsible and vested in the process. It may be necessary to convince them about how beneficial it is to be organized by reminding them that they would spend less time on chores or have more free time, etc.

Routines could be simple, such as brushing your teeth in the morning, or having a specific place to do homework each night. Even though these are simple tasks or small parts of each day, knowing what the expectations are is reassuring.

Organizational skills also help children perform well in school while also staying on track at home. Getting organized is only half the battle. Staying organized is another challenge all together. Staying organized can help reduce family stress. Listed below are twelve ways that can help your child or children and your family stay organized and live a more stress free life together!

Twelve Tips to Staying Organized:

1. Break tasks into chunks – simplify multi-step directions and do one thing at a time.
2. Make checklists or to-do lists – check off accomplishments as they move through the list so they can see their productivity and progress.
3. Create a calendar for time management – establish when certain tasks or projects need to be completed and have students gauge how much time it will take to complete a certain task.
4. Schedules – use picture schedules or keep a written schedule for the day so your child knows what to expect.

5. Color-coding – use color-coding to identify different subjects or assignments to keep them visually organized.
6. Create fun memory aids – make up songs, sentences, acronyms, or phrases to help remember concepts or steps, ex: ROYGBIV – red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet – the colors of the rainbow.
7. Create an organized workspace – a specific place for schoolwork that also has all the supplies they will need to complete their work.
8. Clutter clean out – go through your child’s backpack and other belongings with them regularly to help them stay clutter free and focused on current tasks or assignments.
9. Help your child think ahead – each night, plan for the next day or talk about upcoming events or assignments.
10. Chores and Responsibilities – give your child tasks to do which involve sorting or categorizing around the house. Ex: sorting socks and shoes, or emptying the dishwasher.
11. Collections – does your child have a specific interest? Have them cultivate a collection based on that interest that involves classifying or arranging like cards, rocks, or stickers.
12. Teach the one in, one out rule – when you take a toy out to play with, it needs to be cleaned up and put away before taking out something different.

Try one tip at a time and see how it works. Small changes can make a huge difference and impact in your daily life. For more tips, tricks, and enjoyable picture books to read with your kids about organization, please visit the following links:

"I Just Want to Do It My Way" by Julia Cook: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BkUjusc-vxk>

"I Can't Find My Whatchamacallit" by Julia Cook: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K4x7o6PYjl0>

Sincerely,

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