

## **IMPROVING YOUR CHILD'S ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS**

One of the most common causes of poor grades and school performance is *disorganization*. Organization and planning ahead are learned skills. In order for students to become more organized, they will need to have a PLAN and practice it. Children have a hard time organizing themselves and staying motivated to practice good organizational skills. Parents play an important role in teaching organizational skills and in keeping them motivated to practice the skills.

### **SIGNS OF DIFFICULTIES WITH ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS**

- Forget to bring home homework and assignments
- Does not know the exact homework assignment
- Fails to return completed work
- Does not know when the teacher gives homework (days of the week)
- Fails to bring home books or needed materials
- Does not have papers and study guides for tests
- Does not have a regular study space
- Can't find important papers
- Falls asleep during homework
- Runs out of time while doing homework

### **METHODS FOR TEACHING ORGANIZATION**

#### **1. Teacher Assignments**

Some teachers assign homework only on particular days. Teachers tend to provide assignments at the beginning or at the end of the period. Have your child speak to the teacher to know how and when assignments are given.

#### **Daily Planner**

- Either use a planner that the school provides or you can make your own planner using a weekly calendar. Print September through January in advance and bind the document using spiral binding. Print shops can bind the planner for you.
- Remember to try to set up planner using colors that corresponds to the specific subject area. Use small colored stickers on the left column of the planner. Assignments are written next to the color dot specific to the subject. This makes it consistent for the child. All texts and folders have the same colored dot.  
At the end of the day your child will open his/her planner and color correlate the books needed for homework assignments.
- For some children who have a lot of difficulty with far point copying, speak to the teacher and ask if your child can have assistance in copying the homework, or if homework assignments can be typed ahead and given to your child.

## 2. The Locker

- Very little room is designated in your child's locker. Minimize any fancy organizers or shelves, one shelf can be used (purchased at Staples) for books that need to go home. After class your child can check organizer and if homework is given, place the text on the homework shelf. Use masking tape to label the shelves. The bottom can be the homework book shelf.
- Taped to the back of the locker is an extra color coded schedule for your child differentiating A vs. B days. This schedule should also be taped on the front of the planner, Separate the A and B days by using 2 small index cards.

## 3. Timing/Getting to Class on Time

- Using a sport watch or any watch that has a timer as part of it. This can be used to help your child keep track of time in between classes.

## 4. Loose leaf binders

- The best binder for the child who has a lot of difficulty with transitioning classes in a timely manner and in sorting out which book/folder to take to class is the "self contained" binder. This binder has a zipper for closure. Color coded folders (same as the planner, text books) are all placed in the binder. Spiral notebooks are placed in the binder behind the folder. Notebooks have the color coded stickers to match the folders and text books.
- Use plastic 3 ring folders. Paper folders get torn easily. Use loose leaf paper that has the plastic covering by the 3 rings to prevent tearing. Folders can be secured by using Velcro strips. This will also help in keeping papers contained. **Remind your child to date all papers in folders. This will help in sorting old material from new needed work.**
- The self contained loose leaf has a section for pencils/pens/calculators and any other needed goodies. All the pockets have velcro to prevent things from falling apart.
- Many of the teachers want to help your child. They will allow your child to carry the loose leaf with them to minimize transitioning to the locker in between classes.
- If a specific textbook is required your child can check their schedule and by using the color code on the texts quickly get the text.

## 5. Backpacks

- The dark hole syndrome – Careful, papers and unknown objects may end up getting inside and important notes from teachers. Notes from teachers should also be placed in the subject folders from each specific class.
- Regular backpacks are recommended to avoid back stress and unusual strain on a particular shoulder.
- The weight and shoulder depression provided by the backpack can be organizing to the nervous system.

## 6. The key to order – Paper sorting

- One of the most basic but important skills required for organization.
- Use a large file box organizer with hanging folders. Inside the hanging folders are individual color coded folders labeled by month.
- Every 2 weeks have your child place old papers, tests and assignments in designated folders to avoid the binder becoming overstuffed. The folders should be kept in your child's room to be used for future studying.

## 7. Schedules

- Schedules help your child map out a way to stay organized for the day and week. They help your child plan ahead. Dry erase calendars or large weekly planner can be taped on your child's door, wall, etc. The schedule should include a list of all homework assignments and other activities and responsibilities. If possible make a photocopy of the assignments and checklists and tape it on the refrigerator.
- Stay consistent in using color coded stickers specific to each subject.
- Allow your child to number the order in which they would like to complete the homework assignments. Have them put a check or cross out after the work has been checked by you and is complete.
- Timers can be used to help with time management.

<b>Things to do today</b>	<b><u>Mon</u></b>	<b><u>Tues</u></b>	<b><u>Wed</u></b>	<b><u>Thurs</u></b>	<b><u>Fri</u></b>	<b><u>Sat</u></b>	<b><u>Sun</u></b>
3:00-3:30 Snack and watch TV		Baseball	SS	Book	Spelling		Pool
3:30-4:30 Homework:		game	Test!!!	report	test		party
1. Read		7:30	Guitar	due			4:00
2. Math worksheet			lesson				
3. Write out spelling words			5:00				
4:30-5:00 Eat supper							
5:00-6:30 Baseball practice							
6:30-7:30 Play outside							
7:30-8:00 Practice instrument							

Daily and weekly schedule example

### **8. Set a designated study time**

- Children should know that a certain time every day is reserved for studying and doing homework. The best time is usually not right after school because children need some time to unwind. The schedule is very specific to your child and their ability to transition from work, play and back to work.

### **9. Study place**

- Children should study in the same place every night where supplies and materials are close at hand.
- A homework supply bin can be set up with extra pencils, erasers, rulers, staplers, paper clips, etc.
- This space does not have to be a bedroom, but should be a quiet, low key environment.
- Young children may want to be close to a parent or caregiver for additional support and help.
- Please refer to the list of foods and movement breaks during homework.

### **10. Preparation for the next day**

- Before your child goes to bed at night have him/her pack all necessary books and review the schedule to make sure that all of the assignments have been completed and are placed in the correct folder.
- For some children one homework folder can be used. A small color sticker or color marker can be used on the homework to help your child sort the paper into the correct folder after the work has been graded. This folder can be kept in the front section of the binder.

### **11. Tips to help motivate your child**

- Link school lessons to your child's life. If he/she is interested in percentages, ask him to figure something out that he would like to purchase using percentages.
- Link your child's interest to academics. If you child loves boats, cars, animals and etc. get these topic books from the library as a reward.
- Encourage your child to share their expertise. Talking about topics of interest is a great self esteem booster.