

Improve Organization



Organization is the ability to arrange elements and develop systematic strategies to reach an ultimate goal. There are two types of organization: organization of the self and organization of materials. Organization of the self refers to one's ability to complete tasks and is a core

component of the skill of planning. Organization of refers to the ability to access the necessary materials when needed. Through organization, one can take a step-by-step approach that will assist in achieving one's goals. To improve organization may involve both short and long term goals and requires a person to take all aspects of a situation into account.

Home and School Situations Requiring Organization

- Recording and completing homework assignments
- Organizing one's backpack, desk, locker, and room
- Preparing and having needed items at school and sporting events
- Playing games at recess (picking players, establishing rules, setting up)
- Keeping track of and planning for events
- Completing tasks consisting of multiple steps
- Writing a paper
- Maintaining an email account
- Creating a play list on an iPod

Hints and Strategies to Improve Organization

1. Teach by doing. Discuss plans for the day or verbalize the steps of completing a series of tasks, such as errands. Use calendars, sticky notes, and other visual reminders for yourself to model these organizational skills to your child. Display regular routines (such as putting your keys, wallet, and cell-phone in a certain spot everyday) for your child to observe.

2. Purchase a journal or assignment book. Have your child write in it everything that needs to be completed (e.g. homework, upcoming tests and assignments), as well as scheduling notes (e.g. sports games, practices, and club meetings). This will help organize schoolwork and make keeping track of assignments and activities easier.

3. Help your child to develop methods for organizing their bedroom. One helpful way of doing so is by taping drawings or digital pictures to dresser or desk drawers to designate where the items in each picture go. Encourage your child to initiate the organization by taking pictures of items that he/she groups together.

4. Use predictable schedules and routines and prepare in advance for any changes that might occur. Place a clock in your child's bedroom as a reminder to keep to an on-time schedule. Provide a regular place to put backpacks at the conclusion of the school day and schedule regular times to clean and organize the backpack.

5. Develop a plan and a description of what constitutes a clean room, by taking photographs of what a clean room looks like. Schedule a weekly time for your child to clean her room and have designated containers for toys and other belongings. Regularly reinforce your child for her efforts

and provide an appropriate allowance or meaningful privileges for successful completion of household tasks.

6. Encourage a hobby requiring organization. Examples of hobbies can include: collecting "*Pokemon*" or baseball cards, rocks, shells, "*American Girl*" dolls, or stamps. Help your child find some type of organizer (a shelf, tackle box, or card "sleeves") to systematize their materials.

7. Practice organization with digital technologies. Many older children and teenagers enjoy and frequently use digital technologies such as cell-phones, tablets and iPods. These technologies present many opportunities for organization that you can encourage your child to take advantage of. For example, helping your child to create a play list of favorite songs on an iPod or iPhone; or to rearrange applications on an iPod Touch in a logical manner are two opportunities that your child can use to practice organization. Cell-phones can also be fun for organizing telephone numbers or photographs of one's family and friends. The best way to assist your child in practicing these skills on their iPod or cell-phone, is to practice these techniques with them initially and point out the benefits of using these types of organization.

8. Practice organizational skills with computer and internet-based technologies. Encourage your child to use the many internet-based technologies available in order to practice organization skills. For example, Google Docs is a great tool for word processing and later organizing documents by file type. Similarly, "*Picasa*," a free Google application that can be used for organizing pictures, or applications such as "*Photobucket*" and "*Flickr*", also provide your child with the opportunity to practice organization skills in a fun manner.

9. Ask your child to select one area of their life in which they wishes to improve their organization. By doing this,

you involve your child in setting a more specific goal for him/herself rather than simply “getting organized.” For example, a child who struggles to find their athletic equipment every time they have practice might want to come up with a simple solution for this problem. One solution to this may be placing an over-sized, open-topped container in a common space in which all of their sporting equipment can go into; this might be best done in a garage or mudroom, where your child will notice it, and it is not in the way of the rest of the household. Other areas that children might choose to focus their organization might be to keep better track of their homework, to have a special and consistent place to keep their iPod or cell-phone, or to identify and maintain a location for special toys (such as “Legos,” dolls, or smaller hand-held video-games).

Games and Activities That Can Practice Organization

Collections (e.g. stickers, shells, rocks, baseball cards) – When your child has a collection of something, it offers them the opportunity to practice categorizing and organizing these materials.

“World of Warcraft” – Massive multiplayer online games (MMOG), such as “World of Warcraft,” require players to be organized by collecting and acquiring various items in order to be successful in future levels.

Puzzles – Puzzles allow your child to break down the larger task into smaller ones, such as focusing on a corner or part of the puzzle, and grouping together pieces with similar colors or pictures.

Play Kitchens/Play Tool Workshops – The use of play kitchens or workshops offers your child a place to practice her bedroom organization skills on a smaller scale.

“Monopoly” (when your child is given responsibility to be the banker) – Giving your child an important responsibility in a board game, such as the banker, will help your child to recognize the importance of organization since the game cannot proceed without his role.

Helping to put away groceries in their appropriate places, unloading the dishwasher, or putting away laundry – These household chores offer your child the opportunity to practice developing methods to do chores, categorize items, and break larger tasks into smaller ones.

“Solitaire” – This popular game, available on most computers, allows your child to identify patterns and follow a method in order to succeed.

Simulation Computer Games (“SimTower,” “SimCity,” “The Sims”) – The different “Sims” computer games require your child to use a variety of organization skills, such as managing money and keeping track of materials, in order to successfully build and maintain the desired tower, city, or person.

Websites and Articles on Organization

[LearningWorks For Kids](#) : The premier resource for executive function information, offering a detailed explanation of organization, tips for parents, and activities to improve this skill.

[Coordinated Campaign for Learning Disabilities](#) : A list of general tips to help children improve their daily organizational skills.

[Scholastic](#): This site provides 12 different ways they can better their child’s organization skills.

[National Association for Gifted Children](#): This site focuses on academic organization and provides a list of links to other valuable organization-building sites.

Books on Organization

[Brain Hacks: Work Smarter, Stay Focused, and Achieve Your Goals](#) by Lara Honos-Webb, PhD. (Ch. 3) “Filled with actionable strategies proven to improve focus, increase productivity, and promote well-being, Brain Hacks will help you transform the way you work, live, and feel by tapping into the power of your executive functioning skills.” – Amazon

[Executive Functioning Workbook](#) by Melissa Mullin, PhD. and Karen Fried, Psy.D. (Unit 5) “This EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING WORKBOOK increases student’s ability to plan, start, and finish work independently. It identifies student’s aims and challenges, builds thinking skills, and provides tools to help build organizational strategies.”- Amazon

[Executive Functioning Skills Printables Workbook: For Students Learning Life Skills](#) S.B. Linton (Pg. 11-17) “For teens and youth with special needs. These are Executive Functioning Skills Printables Worksheets for Students with Autism, Similar Special Needs, ADHD, LD and Executive Functioning Needs.”- Amazon

[Executive Functioning Workbook for Kids: 40 Fun Activities to Build Memory, Flexible Thinking, and Self-Control Skills at Home, in School, and Beyond](#) by Sharon Grand, PhD, BCN. (Ch. 3) “Help kids grow their executive functioning skills with activities for ages 6 to 9!”- Amazon

[Learning to Plan and Be Organized: Executive Function Skills for Kids With AD/HD](#) by Kathleen Nadeau, PhD.(Ch. 6) “Featuring real-life advice, strategies, and tips, Learning to Plan and Be Organized is a practical guide that teaches kids with AD/HD how to enhance their executive function skills of

planning and organization.” -Amazon

[Organizational Skills Training for Children with ADHD](#) by Richard Gallagher, Howard B. Abikiff, and Elana G. Spira. (Unit 2) “This indispensable manual presents an easy-to-implement intervention with proven effectiveness for children with ADHD in grades 3 to 5.”- Amazon

[Playing Smarter in a Digital World: A Guide to Choosing and Using Popular Video Games and Apps to Improve Executive Functioning in Children and Teens](#) by [Randy Kulman](#), Ph.D. (Ch. 15) “A book to help parents to make their children’s digital playtime educational”- Amazon

[School Made Easier: A Kid’s Guide to Study Strategies and Anxiety-Busting Tools](#) by Wendy L. Moss, PhD, and Robin A. DeLuca-Acconi, LSCW (Ch. 4) “ The book teaches students ways to reduce their anxiety, increase their confidence in school, and study more effectively.” – Amazon

[Smart but Scattered: The Revolutionary “Executive Skills” Approach to Helping Kids Reach Their Potential](#) by Peg Dawson, EdD, and Richard Guare, PhD (Ch. 17) “Small changes can add up to big improvements–this empowering book shows how.”- Amazon

[The Conscious Parent’s Guide To Executive Functioning Disorder](#) by Rebecca Branstetter, PhD (Ch. 13) “With the strategies and advice in this guide, you and your child will build sustainable bonds, develop positive behaviors, and improve executive functioning skills for life.” – Amazon

[The Everything Parent’s Guide to Children with Executive Functioning Disorder: Strategies to help your child achieve the time-management skills, ... needed to succeed in school and life](#) by Rebecca Bransetter, PhD. (Ch. 14) “The vital skills children need to achieve their full potential!” – Amazon

[The Organized Child : An Effective Program to Maximize Your](#)

[Kid's Potential—in School and in Life](#) by Richard Gallagher, PhD, Elana G. Spira, PhD, and Jennifer L. Rosenblatt, PhD. 5,(Ch. 12) “Concrete examples, tips for strategically using praise and rewards, and practical tools (you can download and print additional copies as needed) help you implement each step of the program. Maximizing your kid’s potential starts now—here’s how.”- Amazon

[Train Your Brain for Success: A Teenager’s Guide to Executive Functions](#) by Randy Kulman, Ph.D.(Ch. 3) “Beginning with a test to determine executive-functioning strengths and weaknesses, the book then explores in detail eight distinct sets of skills, including planning, organization, focus, time management, self-control, , memory, and self-awareness.”- Amazon