

## **ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHERS OF STUDENTS WITH ORGANIZATIONAL PROBLEMS**

**A strong classroom management system helps all students develop positive classroom behavior, study habits, and organizational skills.** Teachers should attempt to maintain an orderly classroom environment that is predictable.

**Design classroom rules that encourage organization.** For example, students need to have necessary materials, work on the assigned activity, stay in seat, and finish required work before going to the next assignment.

**Develop a routine for organization of school materials.** It may be helpful to have a written checklist taped to desktops for reminders. Instruct the entire class how to organize their desks and notebooks and monitor them on a routine and frequent basis.

**Have charts or posters that explain directions for using specific materials in the classroom.** Promote a clean and organized classroom by instructing students on where materials belong and the importance of returning the items when students are finished using them.

**Model being organized and prepared for different activities.** Also, highlight models of organization in other students.

**Help students get into the habit of making reminders of what they need to do,** using such strategies as assignment sheets, daily schedules, and “to do” lists.

**In addition to written checklists, verbally remind students of the materials needed to each specific activity.**

**Encourage self-monitoring.** Teach students to record the number of times they are prepared for particular activities.

**Provide materials to assist with organization.** Provide elementary students with a folder, labeling one side “work to do” and the other “work to turn in.” Have older students (6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade) keep a three-ring binder that is organized chronologically by subject.

**Allow time at the start of each day and during transition periods during the day.** This will allow students to organize themselves as well as their materials.

**Give “warnings” several minutes before transitions are to occur,** so that the students can begin thinking about and preparing for the next activity.

**Reinforce the child when he/she is organized** with rewards that are either tangible or intangible classroom privileges (versus verbal praise).

**Encourage the child to ask questions and receive clarifications regarding any assignment that he/she is unsure about.**

**Talk with the student alone about your expectations and explain to the student in a clear manner what he/she is doing wrong and what he/she can do to improve.**

**Design and implement a contract with the student.** This will clearly illustrate what behavior is expected and what type of reward will occur when the expectations of the contract are met. (The building school psychologist or counselor might be consulted to assist with the contract.)

**Arrange the child's seating next to students who are organized as to encourage modeling and imitation of desired behaviors.**

**Select students who have trouble with organization for responsibilities in the classroom that involve organizational skills.** Tasks may include cleaning up the bookshelf or putting the audiovisual equipment away.

**Clearly describe the sequences of actions required by the student for each activity.** For example, "Get out your pencil," "Open your workbook," etc. As time goes on, give less specific instructions and ask for predictions instead ("What activity is next? What do you need to get ready for it?") If helpful, write the steps down.

**Picture prompts may also be effective to establish a "look then do" sequence, and promote independence.**

**Break down assignments into "mini-assignments."** Build in reinforcement as the student finishes each part.

**Permit natural consequences to occur when student does not organize his/her material or time appropriately.** For example, if student does not complete his/her reading assignment, then he/she must stay in at recess time or after school to make up the work.

#### **Additional Resources:**

[www.hellofriend.org/parents/organizational.html](http://www.hellofriend.org/parents/organizational.html): Practicing Organizational Skills at Home.

[www.ldonline.org/ld\\_indepth/teaching\\_techniques/strategies.html#organization](http://www.ldonline.org/ld_indepth/teaching_techniques/strategies.html#organization): Teaching Organization.

[www.parenting\\_child\\_development.com/organization](http://www.parenting_child_development.com/organization): Organizational Skills.

**Contributors:**

Abigail Cash