



## Getting and Staying Organized

Jennifer Martinous, OTR/L, ATP  
TechACCESS

Teachers and families often struggle to help students get and stay organized. Organizational skills can be particularly troublesome for students with learning differences. Time management can also be challenging. Here are some strategies for educators and families to consider when addressing these issues with students:

- Avoid clutter. Be mindful of papers piling up on students' desks and in their folders. Designate time in their day/week to clean out papers and materials they no longer need.
- Have students use a planner and encourage them to use it daily. Teach students to write down important information immediately. Use one calendar to plan all activities. Using more than one calendar, you run the risk of scheduling conflicts and missed assignments. Color-code similar activities in your calendar. For example, highlight upcoming tests in yellow, study time in green.
- Help students select color-coded items to clearly identify all items related to a specific subject.
- Show students the basics: how to stack their books in the order of their schedule/day.
- Use organizational strategies for all subjects:
  - Teach students to track important information by using sticky notes or highlighting tape (this is especially helpful for reviewing information to prepare for a test or to write a book report).
  - Teach students how to break large assignments/projects into smaller, more manageable pieces. Attach a timeline for completion of each task.
  - Develop agendas or checklists for tasks.
- Place a pocket folder or magnetic clip on the side of the student's desk (they can use this to place important papers in, items that need to be organized later or items that need to be brought home).
- Have students divide the inside of their desk space (use heavy-duty cardboard or specially designed desk dividers).
- At home, do the following:
  - Set up a quiet area for homework
  - Establish a "homework routine" and stick to it
  - Create a "homework box" with duplicate school items (i.e. crayons, glue sticks) and keep it in an accessible place
  - Try to have one folder designated for homework and school notices
  - Set aside time weekly to "clean out" backpacks and folders
  - Have your child use a dry erase board, placed in a visible spot, to write "reminders" for what they need
  - Use a large calendar to track projects and their due dates...being able to see things laid out is often helpful for students when managing their time
  - Develop and use a "homework checklist" to help your child be more independent
  - Find a way to help your child remember what they need to bring home...it could be a ribbon attached to their backpack, a list attached to their backpack in a luggage tag, etc.
  - Encourage your child to pack their backpack for the next, the night before, so they are ready for the morning.

TechACCESS  
161 Comstock Parkway, Cranston, RI 02921  
(401) 463-0202 Fax (401) 463-3433  
[techaccess@techaccess-ri.org](mailto:techaccess@techaccess-ri.org)  
[www.techaccess-ri.org](http://www.techaccess-ri.org)

