

12 Ways to Develop Your Child's Organizational Skills

Incorporate fun activities into your child's daily routine to teach important lessons on organization

Instilling a sense of order in your young child may sound like a difficult task. However, by infusing daily routines with fun—from making breakfast to getting ready for bed—your child can learn how to keep things naturally organized with ease. Discover 12 at-home activities you can try with your little one:

1. **Keep a family calendar.** Track everyone's activities on a prominent and accessible calendar, encouraging your child to write her own entries and reference the calendar when making plans. You also might consider checking schedules and updating the calendar as a family over Sunday breakfast.
2. **Introduce checklists.** Whether it's as simple as "3 Things to Do Before Bed" or "What To Take On Vacation," creating and referring to lists together will develop your child's ability to strategize tasks and organize his time.
3. **Assign chores that involve sorting or categorizing.** Grocery shopping, emptying the dishwasher, sorting photos, cleaning out a closet, and other chore that involve pre-planning, making lists, or arranging things are great choices.
4. **Get ready the night before.** This one's always tough — for both of you — but it does work if you can get in the habit.
5. **Use containers and closet organizers.** If there's a place for everything, she'll find it easier to find items, keep neat, and clean up. Build "pick up" time into the daily routine.
6. **Buy your child a planner.** Ask him to help you pick it out or choose one that will appeal to him so he'll be excited about using it. Having his own planner will show him you consider his time valuable and encourage him to create a schedule. Be sure to routinely coordinate the information with your family calendar to avoid conflicts.
7. **Organize schoolwork.** Make sure your child's keeping notes, homework, handouts, and graded assignments in separate folders in a binder. Try to check her backpack nightly and set a time aside each week to go through her binder and get things sorted.
8. **Establish a homework routine.** Help your child make a "study hour" schedule and set up a comfortable workspace -- whether her room or the kitchen table. Encourage her to stick to the schedule even when she doesn't have homework (She can read, review notes, or even do a crossword puzzle.)

9. **Create a homework supply box.** Fill a box with school supplies and encourage your child to store pens, paper, measurement tools, and a calculator in it so he'll have what he needs on hand.
10. **Cook together.** Cooking teaches measuring, following directions, sorting ingredients, and managing time — all key elements in organization. Involve your child in meal planning too, challenging her to help you put together a shopping list.
11. **Cultivate an interest in collecting.** If your child has a particular interest, encourage him to create and organize the collection. It can even be something free — such as rocks or canceled stamps — that he can sort, classify, and arrange.
12. **Reward and provide support with organizational tasks.** Your child may find organizing a challenge, so help her develop her routine and give her a treat for jobs well done!

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