

# Tips for Developing Organisational Skills in Children

Developing good organisational skills is a key ingredient for success in school and in life. Although some people by nature are more organised than others, anyone can put routines and systems in place to help a child become more organised. Here are some ideas which may be helpful but remember this will not happen immediately and the child or young person will need support initially. Do not try to do too many areas at one time.

## School Timetable

Have a copy of this at home, in contact book or locker. Try colour coding subjects to match books. Refer to this every evening at a regular time.

## Checklists

Help your child get in to the habit of using a "to-do" list. Checklists can be used to list assignments and household chores and to remind children to bring appropriate materials to class. It is recommended that children keep a school/home, diary/contact book, small pad or notebook dedicated to listing homework assignments. Crossing completed items off the list will help children feel a sense of accomplishment.

## Organise Homework Assignments

Before beginning a homework session, encourage your child to number assignments in the order in which they are to be done. Children should start with one that's not too long or difficult but avoid saving the longest or hardest assignments for last. It can be helpful to set time limits using a stop watch or egg timer. Build in short breaks if necessary.

## Set a Designated Study Space

Children should study in the same place every night where supplies and materials are close at hand. This space doesn't have to be a bedroom but it should be a quiet place with few distractions. Young children may want their study space near a parent. This should be encouraged, as parents can have the opportunity to monitor progress and encourage good study habits.

## 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, as most children benefit from time to unwind first. The timings may depend on other factors such as after school clubs. Parents should include their child in making this decision. Even if your child does not have homework, the reserved time should be used to review the day's lessons, read for pleasure or work on a current project.

## Keep Notebooks

Help your child keep track of papers by organising them in a binder or notebook. The purpose of a notebook is to help keep track of and remember the material for, each day's classes and to organise the

material later to prepare for tests and quizzes. Use dividers to separate class notes or colour-code notebooks. Having separate “to-do” and “done” folders helps organise worksheets, notices and items to be signed by parents, as well as providing a central place to store completed assignments.

## **Introduce Checklists**

Whether it's as simple as “3 things to do before bed” or “What to take on holiday” creating and referring to lists together will develop your child's ability to prioritise tasks and organise his or her time.

## **Conduct a Weekly Clean-up**

Children should be encouraged to go through and sort out book bags and notebooks on a weekly basis. Old tests and papers should be organised and kept in a separate file at home.

## **Create a Household Schedule**

Try to establish and stick to a regular dinnertime and a regular bedtime. This will help your child fall in to a pattern when at home. Children with a regular bedtime go to school well rested. Try to limit television watching and computer play to specific amounts of time during the day.

## **Keep a Master Calendar**

Keep a large, wall-sized calendar for the household that lists the family's commitments, schedules for extracurricular activities, days off from school and major events at home and at school. Note dates when your children have big exams or due dates for projects. This will help family members keep track of each other's activities and avoid scheduling conflicts.

## **Prepare for the Day Ahead**

Before your child goes to bed he or she should pack schoolwork and books in a book bag. Clothes should be laid out with shoes, socks and accessories. This will cut down on morning confusion and allow your child to prepare for the day ahead.

## **Provide necessary support while your Child learns to become more organised**

Help your child develop organisational skills by photocopying checklists and schedules and taping them to the refrigerator, notice board or back of door where they can be seen. Give children gentle reminders about filling in calendar dates and keeping papers and materials organised.

**Break down** large tasks in to small, manageable tasks.

## **Tidying Bedroom**

Have containers for everything, label drawers, tidy up in stages e.g. all washing in basket and then pile up books.

## **Contact details**

### **Children's Therapy Services**

Telephone number: 0300 019 2936

For further general health-related information, please ask the relevant department for an information prescription or contact:

The Health Information Centre  
Poole Hospital NHS Foundation Trust  
Longfleet Road  
Poole  
Dorset  
BH15 2JB  
Telephone: 0300 019 8003

[www.uhd.nhs.uk](http://www.uhd.nhs.uk)

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Poole Hospital, Longfleet Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 2JB

Author: **Rebecca Shelton** Date: **February 2021** Version: **Three** Review date: **February 2024** Ref: **166/21**

t: 01202 665511 w: [www.uhd.nhs.uk](http://www.uhd.nhs.uk) : @UHD\_NHS : @UHDTrust : @uhd\_nhs