

WELL-BEING SNAPSHOTS K-7

ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS FOR IMPROVED LEARNING



LET'S GET ORGANIZED FOR LEARNING!

- USE CHECKLISTS**
TO-DO LISTS FOSTER TRACKING
Practice using "to-do" lists with your child. Checking things off can give a child a sense of accomplishment and increase awareness of the work they've put in.
- ORGANIZE HOMEWORK TASKS**
ASSESS THE ASSIGNMENTS
Before tackling a homework assignment, identify the goal and break down the tasks or steps required. Order the steps you'll take and consider starting with the easier ones to help get in a groove.
- DESIGNATE A STUDY SPACE & TIME**
SET BOUNDARIES AROUND WORK TIME
We tend to focus better when there are boundaries around tasks. You can do this by setting specific times for studying and specific times for breaks. You can also do this by setting aside a place or workstation dedicated to doing school work.
- PROVIDE SUPPORT**
TEACH THROUGH MODELING
Organizational skills are learned through practice and with support. Engage in the skills together, coaching them as needed until they can initiate the strategies with minimal prompting.
- BUILD IN ROUTINE**
CREATE PREDICTABLE SCHEDULES
Finding a rhythm can help us move from one task to another. Knowing times for or the order of mealtimes, bedtimes, times for play, times for homework and so on, allow kids a sense of understanding expectations and being able to adjust accordingly.
- PREPARE FOR THE NEXT DAY**
THINK AHEAD
Last minute planning promotes stress, leaving little ability to think rationally and logically about what we need and how we should go about doing the task. Getting organized in advance allows for more thorough thinking, better outcomes and lower stress.

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Do you ever observe your child from a distance when they're attempting to do homework or (not) getting their stuff ready for the following day, and wonder to yourself if they will ever learn organizational skills? You aren't alone. Executive functioning – the ability to remember, think ahead, sequence, analyze, and organize – happens in the frontal lobe of the brain. The prefrontal cortex is the last part of our brains to fully develop, and on average, we don't consider that area in full force until early to mid 20s! No wonder you are scratching your head when you see your kid lose their coat three times in a month, not pack the right binders for class that day or track time well.

So much of our academic learning happens best when the conditions are right and we're fully set for engagement. If there are distractions or work-space clutter, no clear boundaries around homework expectations or time spent, or struggle to break down an assignment into doable chunks, we can quickly become overwhelmed or discouraged and give up on our responsibilities prematurely. Our kids, tweens, and even teens might need to borrow some external organizational thinking and some support coaching along the way. There are some simple and practical habits you can

foster that can enhance your child's learning experience, such as teaching your child how to create their own to-do lists, using a calendar for tracking responsibilities, having them chart their screen time each day for awareness and accountability, or establishing routines and times set specifically to do homework or practice their music, dance, or sport, etc. Rhythms of learning help kids learn to warm up to activities and wind down from them. They then feel more in control of those things when they can count on the time being set aside for them. Having clear boundaries around when something is deemed "complete" or enough time has been spent working on a task helps kids feel a sense of accomplishment which can fuel their motivation for next time.

We don't tend to develop these organizational skills without some intentional instruction and support, so consider what components of your family life lend themselves to opportunities to grow your child's executive functioning. And don't forget to point out when you catch them utilizing their organizational thinking! Positive encouragement is a powerful incentive building recognition for habits worked hard for future habit development. ●

FAITH CONNECTION:

Christians & Pop Culture article, Blessed are Those...

RESOURCE LINKS:

[Parenting in the Trenches Podcast episodes S8.E1&4](#)

[Understanding Executive Functioning Well-being BC Home Learning Videos](#)

