

## Skills for Living

### Occupational Therapy Advice for:



### Being Organised



For children who struggle with attention, the ability to organise, plan and sequence a task to complete a project is also often problematic. These problems together are often referred to as executive function. We can support executive function challenges by creating external organisation, using bedrooms and other spaces to show our children how to categorise, plan and carry out a plan in a logical order.

Problems with organisational skills often emerge when children go to secondary school, and they are expected to be able to organise their homework, be on time for different lessons in different places, and have all the right belongings on the right day. Some children find this very difficult, and they can become easily overwhelmed, but they can learn strategies to help them.

Advice to Parents	Advice to children and young people
<p><b>Visual supports</b></p> <p>Help your child to get used to using visual supports, whether they be written or pictorial. You can help produce them to begin with and allow your children to develop independence gradually. Display them in prominent places.</p> <p>Model the use of visual supports in your own life: make shopping lists visible and make it explicit when you put something in your diary.</p>	<p>Write a 'to do' list and cross off tasks when they are complete.</p> <div> </div> <p>Use planners, calendars and diaries. Colour code them if this helps.</p> <p>Put homework due dates in as soon as the teacher gives them.</p> <p>Sounds obvious but remember to look at your planner!</p>

<p><b>Remembering important things</b></p> <p>Try these: Tom Tags - <a href="http://www.orkidideas.com">www.orkidideas.com</a></p>  <p>PICK out the symbol stickers that illustrate the activities, items, events or tasks that you want to list STICK each sticker onto a blank button CLICK each button into an empty space of the chosen tag <i>READY</i> to use right away. They can be fastened to clothing, a bag, door handle or hook</p>	<p>Use a white board for reminders</p> <p>Use apps on the phone with alert functions and diaries.</p>  <p>Have a list of essentials to remember. You could have a different prompt card for each activity or school subject.</p>
<p><b>Finding stuff when you need it</b></p> <p>Don't tidy a child's room for them, but help them to set up and maintain a system for storing and finding things.</p>	<p>Have a place for everything and label necessary e.g. socks in top drawer; tops in the next.</p> <p>Provide storage for school items. You could decorate boxes and have one for homework 'to do' and 'ready to go'.</p> <p>Have a de-clutter day once a month and throw out stuff you don't need.</p>
<p><b>Keeping time</b></p> <p>Some children are able to tell the time, but have difficulty sensing the passing of time. This can mean that they underestimate how long it takes to complete tasks, resulting in them being late. Other children get distracted easily or have no sense or urgency.</p>	<p>Wear a watch.</p> <p>Use the alarm function as a reminder of the next appointment /class</p> <p>Use a sand timer or digital countdown function on a mobile phone to see time passing as you do a task.</p>

<p><b>Managing a bag</b></p> <p>Some children always carry all their books for all their subjects, for fear of forgetting something. This makes for a heavy bag and also means it is harder to keep on top of homework, or find particular items.</p>	<p>Pack your bag the night before school, and unpack your books/packed lunch box when they come in.</p> <p>Empty your bag completely every week, and throw away rubbish and items no longer needed.</p> <p>Use a bag which has several separate pockets to hold different items, e.g. stationery, books, lunch.</p> <p>Keep your bag and PE kit by the door so as not to forget them.</p>
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**Useful websites and books for more information:**

<p>Mama OT – occupational therapy tips for teaching children organisational skills.</p>	<p><a href="http://mamaot.com/tips-for-teaching-kids-time-management-planning-and-organization/">http://mamaot.com/tips-for-teaching-kids-time-management-planning-and-organization/</a></p>
<p>Blog for teaching executive functioning skills.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.engagingmindsonline.com/blog-posts/categories/blog">http://www.engagingmindsonline.com/blog-posts/categories/blog</a></p>
<p>Book by Carolyn Dalgliesh, 2013</p>	<p>The Sensory Child Gets Organised: Proven Systems for Rigid, Anxious, or Distracted Kids</p>
<p>Book by Peg Dawson and Richard Guare</p>	<p>Executive skills in children and adolescents, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.</p>
<p>Book by Martin L. Kutscher and Marcella Moran</p>	<p>Organizing the Disorganized Child: Simple Strategies to Succeed in School</p>