

Teaching kids to get organized

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

If your kids are like most, their backpacks, desks and lockers quickly become a disorganized mess of homework papers, permission slips and notebooks.

Teaching children how to make sense of it all is critical to helping them become more successful in school.

“Organizing schoolwork and materials allows kids to organize their minds so they are better able to focus on their studies,” says Jodie Watson, Founder and President of Supreme Organization and the Organizing Expert from TLC’s “Real Simple. Real Life.”

Here are some simple and helpful tips from Watson to get children organized for school success:

—Get children involved in creating systems to get organized. The more involved they are in the process, the more they will stick with it. Create a system that encompasses everything from the right school supplies to designated study areas at home to daily routines for completing homework and getting organized.

—Create a binder to hold a child’s class work as he or she goes through the year, or individual binders for each class. Use durable or heavy duty binders so they will withstand wear and tear throughout the school year, which will save money in the long run.

—Color-code and label prominently. Use different color binders for each subject so children can easily find the one they need in a hurry. Label the front cover and spine with the child’s name, year and semester. Label the inside with their name and a contact number in case the binder gets lost or left at school.

—Create a desktop file system in a child’s study area at home. Color-code file folders for each subject to match the color-coding system they have in their binder(s). Make file folder labels on the computer or using a permanent marker so each folder can be easily identified.

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—Have the child update and organize their assignments, backpack and binder each evening as part of their homework routine to be ready for the following day. Getting them to stick to routines is important. A great way to get a child enthusiastic about their organizational binder is to create a fully personalized, custom binder. This will help them continue using it to keep work organized throughout the year.

—Place a dry erase monthly calendar in the child's room or study area at home. Use dry erase markers to note days/times of classes, and when assignments or papers are due. Use different color markers for each class to easily differentiate them and to give a good overview of the child's schedule and deadlines.

—Insert a copy of the child's class schedule into a sheet protector and place at the front of his or her binder. Be sure to include class name, teacher, room number, location, and days/times of classes.

“Getting organized helps children to be less stressed. When they know where their work is and are able to find what they need when they need it, they don't waste time and energy looking for lost or misplaced papers and have more time to get their assignments done well and in a timely fashion,” emphasizes Watson.