

## Organization

One of the things that parents often ask me about is the concept of organization, and I've delayed talking about organization in the Pay Attention to Attention program because it would be an example of do what I say, not as I do. In fact, my family would howl and laugh with laughter at the idea that I'm going to say much about organization whatsoever, because when it comes to my things and my materials, I have a long way to go in terms of improving my organization. But at the request of many parents, I'm going to give you some five or six basic principles that I think are helpful in building organizational skills.

One concept is the idea of everything has a home. So instead of saying I want you to put this away, I want you to put this in its home. Where does this belong? What would its home be? And you want to establish what's the home for your book bag, what's the home for your coat? What's the home for your work? What's the home for your cell phone? You really want to have the idea that as many things as possible should have a home, because when things are in a home, you know where to find them. This concept is everything should have a home.

The second concept is organizational habits. I think organizational habits are more important than organizational skills. Let me just give you one example. You walk in the house, you hang up your coat. To hang up your coat in his home. Maybe it's on the hook by the door. If you forget to hang up your coat, i.e., your habit didn't serve you and the coat is on the floor, your mom and dad might remind you to pick up the coat. But that's not helping with organization, is it? That's helping with cooperation. But it's not really building an organizational habit. What you would do is you'd go outside and walk through the door, take up your coat, hang it on its own. You'd walk outside, hang up your coat, hanging it in its home. Same thing with putting your homework in, let's say, your homework folder. You want to practice completing part of your work, putting it in the folder, completing part of another assignment, putting it in your folder. You don't only put the homework in the folder when it's all done, you practice by putting homework in the folder as you complete each segment. The repetition builds the habit so that when mom or Dad says where is the homework, the child knows where their homework is. They know it's in its home. E  
Everything has its home. Build organizational habits, not just organizational skills.

The third concept is it's easier to be organized when you are simplified when you have less stuff. The idea is you want to eliminate from your binder. You want to look around your room and minimize. You want to take the things out of your binder that you don't need anymore. You want to look in your room and decide whether you really need it. Where it should be? Should it be stored, or should it be on the shelf? The simpler your environment, the easier it is to be organized.

A next component is simply the idea of noticing which I am terrible at, I do not notice things, so I don't notice and put them in their home. I lack the habit and I'm oblivious to the fact that my things are disorganized. What I suggest you do, is as a family, you take time together as part of

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a routine to just go to different rooms and notice stuff. Just look at the closet, look in the drawers, look in a tv room and just notice what needs to be organized tidied up, put away, eliminated, because we don't need it anymore. Just getting in a habit of noticing will help with your organizational skills.

Related to that is being mindful, and we've talked about this, you can be mindful about certain things and in a way that facilitates your organization. That would be going through your backpack mindfully and paying attention and being more aware of what's in it. If something's taken out, or something's missing you will notice. Practicing mindfulness within an organizational habit is very, very powerful.

Another ingredient to building organizational skill has to do with organizational motivations. It's often, how shall I put this, it's not clear to a child why being organized matters and then some important to model for a child how being organized saves you time, helps things last longer, avoids consequences, maybe the consequences that you experienced when you've lost your homework and you have to do it over. Sometimes you have to provide initially some external motivation, some rewards for practicing organizational habits, noticing things during your mindfulness times. Sometimes you have to provide reward to get children started on this organizational mindset, so again, I'm going to try and do a better job of being more organized as a result of this module, but I would highly recommend that you keep these five simple concepts in mind.