

RESILIENT KIDS

NEWSLETTER by Michael Grose - Australia's leading parenting educator

Helping children to be organised

The ability to organise space, time and possessions is an important but often underestimated success skill.

Some children are naturally well-organised. 'A place for everything and everything in its place' is their mantra even from a young age. These neatniks can be a little compulsive but order and personal organisation lead to greater personal effectiveness and efficiency.

Many children need assistance with organisation. It just doesn't come naturally. Give them a complex project and they flounder as they can't naturally break it into neat chunks and manageable pieces. Give them a number of tasks to do and they will leave one out. Ask them to arrange a series of files and they will struggle unless you create a system to follow. Organisational skills can be learned. Processes and procedures once practised can be part of a set of personal skills that stay for life.

There are four categories of personal organisation skills. By understanding each category you can work out your own ways of developing children's organisational skills:

- 1. Chunking:** Breaking complex tasks into small, manageable steps. For instance, week-long school projects can be broken down into a series of smaller tasks that can be completed daily.
- 2. Goal-setting:** Helping children set small and large goals is one tangible way of increasing their

effectiveness. E.G "I want to learn to spell 20 new words from my list by Friday." "I want to save \$15 this month from my pocketmoney."

3. Making plans: Working out steps required to help achieve goals and objectives requires children to look ahead. "I will learn five words a day. I'll get mum to hear me each night." "I'll put \$4 aside each week. I've got to buy my brother a birthday present. Now that will be difficult but if I..."

4. Managing time: Time planning tools such as lists and diaries can help children keep schedules, hand work in on time and help prevent children overestimating what they can achieve.

Children's homework can provide headaches for parents. Encourage children to get organised by thinking ahead and planning their homework around their extra-curricular activities. A weekly planner or diary will help older students get organised. Assisting children to become organised is perhaps the best way parents can help at home.



WHAT'S YOUR CHILD LIKE?

IS YOUR CHILD WELL-ORGANISED?

DOES HE

1. Need to be constantly reminded about simple things? **Yes [0] No [2]**
2. Enjoy order and feel uncomfortable with too much clutter and mess? **Yes [2] No [0]**
3. Easily break big tasks into small jobs and enjoy doing multi-step tasks? **Yes [2] No [0]**
4. Establish his own routines and function

well when the usual daily routine is altered unexpectedly? **Yes [2] No [0]**

5. Leave most things to the last minute before they are done? **Yes [0] No [2]**

SCORE:

- 10:** An organisational type. Can be a little scary for mere mortals.
6-8: Works fairly well even around clutter.
0-4: Probably needs help with the basics.



TRY THIS...

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

To promote organisational skills in your children try the following four strategies:

- 1.** Use **lists** for forgetful kids. For instance, ask them to list the five things they need to do in the morning before going to school.
- 2.** Have a monthly family **calendar** for important activities and events. Encourage children to place important activities on it and to check it regularly.
- 3.** Before children begin homework ask them to **estimate** how long it will take and then check their estimates. Encourage children to work efficiently and quickly rather than spend long periods of time doing tasks.
- 4.** Encourage children to set **goals** on a regular basis. E.G. "How many books will you read this week?" "How much will you save this week?"

ACTION PLAN

First Step . . .

Next Step . . .

For more ideas about promoting resilience in children visit www.parentingideas.com.au

QUOTE

"We can no more afford to spend major time on minor things than we can spend minor time on major things."
JIM ROHN