

Getting organized and managing time effectively are ongoing challenges, but important to helping our children function at their best. Chaos is stressful to anyone. We all operate most efficiently when we feel our lives are structured, orderly, predictable, and safe. Some children pick up their parents' habits (good and bad), but all need to be taught specific organizational skills. I find the holidays to be particularly chaotic, so I'm going to devote the next several Counselors Corners to different aspects of getting organized!

Some ideas for organizing your kids' papers:

- **FIND A SPOT**: shelves, bookcases, boxes and baskets are great for collections of treasures and for collecting important papers. If you have a drawer you can designate for school supplies or papers, ideally one for each child, all the better. You can buy inexpensive plastic, stackable drawers that can be located in a laundry room or another accessible but out of the way location.
- **CREATE A FILE SYSTEM**: If possible have a filing cabinet with hanging file folders and color coded stickers with categories divided according to classes or projects. When the school year ends, go through the files and:
- **PURGE OR STORE**: Anyone who's seen Mission Organization knows how important it is to purge! Memorabilia or special papers/projects can be kept in a storage box under a bed, in large manila folders labeled by grade, or even cardboard or plastic boxes in the attic. Include your children in the keep/purge decision process.
- **START YOUNG**: Even preschoolers can benefit by having their own space to keep projects or special work they want to save.
- Lastly, **RESPECT YOUR CHILD'S PROPERTY**: What is junk to you may be your child's treasure. Remember that chances are good that their opinion will change soon, so revisit a collection every few months, and that special rock or paper will be on the purge list some day.

Upcoming topics: time management for kids, helping kids do it themselves, and ending morning madness.