At a Glance: 7 Ways to Teach Your Middle-Schooler Organization Skills

From planning for deadlines to keeping school materials in order, organizational skills are important in middle school. Here are ways you can help your child improve these skills at home.

Lesson 1: Organize lists in a logical order.
Goal: Take some of the chaos out of chores.
Example: Projects can be organized by due date—or by time needed or how hard (or easy) they are.

Lesson 2: Teach how to divide and conquer.
Goal: Keep deadlines for long-term projects from creeping up.
Example: Using a calendar, show your child how doing a little work each day can help her prioritize and organize tasks.

Lesson 3: Have a front-door "go" box.
Goal: Have everything your child needs for school at the door.
Example: Designate a place for items your child needs to remember for school: backpack, projects, gym clothes, clarinet... or an eraser!

Lesson 4: Color-code tasks.
Goal: Prioritize chores and messages by color.
Example: You might use red sticky notes for important jobs and green ones for things that have to be done by the end of the week.

Lesson 5: Use a whiteboard.
Goal: Make things easier to visualize.
Example: Your child can make to-do lists, map out thoughts for an assignment or just write down things he wants to remember.

Lesson 6: Set a weekly backpack cleaning day.
Goal: Get rid of clutter and find important items.
Example: Clearing out old papers, leftover snacks and pencil stubs once a week can make it easier for your child to find things.

Lesson 7: Keep track of time.
Goal: Improve planning skills.
Example: Writing down start and end times for chores or assignments for a couple weeks can help your child figure out how to budget time in the future.

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