

Organizing Kids: Tips from a fresh space



Toys:

- Limit toys coming into the house – less is more when it comes to choices for play
- Sort like with like – all the Legos with the Legos, and the Barbies with the Barbies
- Create “zones” of play: an art area, an open floor space for play, a table for puzzles and games, etc.
- Place items in appropriately sized bins (not one large toy box) that are labeled
- Place bins in such a way that a child can easily access the bin AND put it back
- Use heavy duty Ziploc freezer bags in small and snack sizes for parts in games
- Enforce, within reason, the 1 in – 1 out rule, or use the “when the bin is full, no more” rule
- Be selective in which items to keep when your child outgrows a toy – only the truly cherished or the ones that will realistically be used by another child should stay
- Create a daily tidy up of toys (and other items) at the end of the day – and remember – “clean up your room” doesn’t say much to a kid. Be specific, “shoes go in the shoe bin”, then “books go on the book shelf”, etc.

Clothes:

- Only keep sizes currently being worn, and in the current season accessible to the child
- Store out of season or other sizes in clear plastic bins that are clearly labeled with size and name of child
- Make clothing accessible to kids so they can dress themselves, and put their clothes away when clean – kids can start this usually around age 3 or 4.
- Label drawers in dressers, shelves and bins where clothes may be stored
- Add hanger dividers to the closet that may be labeled to separate hanging items, as well as kids sized hangers
- Pick out clothes the night before for school age children, and consider a closet accessory that lets you pick out a whole week at a time
- Keep a plastic laundry hamper in the child’s room – one with holes for ventilation and wheels so they can easily transport it to the laundry area

Papers:

- Be selective in papers that are kept – enlist the child’s help with decision making
- If it is difficult to make a decision, gather all papers in a large folder or file for a quarter or semester, then go through them – time can give perspective
- School papers, homework and projects can be stored in hanging folders in a portable file bin, or in a binder with clear plastic covers for the best pieces
- Art projects and large papers can be stored in artist portfolios or large under bed plastic bins
- Consider taking photos of child holding projects and work, and keeping these on the computer instead of physically keeping all of the work
- Go through papers that come home with the child from school daily – enter dates on the family calendar, check homework, sign forms and return immediately – make this a daily routine to check the backpack for any stray items

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