

Organization of Materials

Definition: Organization of Materials is the orderliness of work, play and storage spaces (including desks, lockers and backpacks). How does the individual organize their world and belongings, and how does this impacts their ability to function efficiently (e.g. cannot get the job done because they don't have the necessary tools readily available)

Examples: Start homework, then have to stop to get a dictionary, or a calculator. Then stop to get the text book. Then run and get an eraser. They may half way into their exercise and find that they left the instructions or an important part of the assignment at school.

Basic approach:

- 1) Create an external structure to organize
- 2) Checklists
- 3) Create a kit (pencil case with everything you need)
- 4) Duplicate tools (have everything at home AND at school)

Create an organized workspace. Usually NOT the kitchen table. A dedicated desk with drawer organizers, cubbies, and bookshelves nearby.

Create a "kit" for needed tools. A pencil case with a small calculator, pencils, pens erasers and anything that would normally be needed for common tasks.

Duplicate the kit for a secondary worksite to eliminate the need to bring everything. This might be a home kit and a school kit. A travel kit with toiletries will eliminate the need to bring everything you need - just grab your kit.

A checklist inside a binder, knapsack or near the door can help the person "stop and check" if they have everything they need.

Colour-coded systems, binders with dividers, boxes and backpacks with multiple pockets can be helpful. Often the look and feel of these organizers make the difference in whether or not they will be used. So the individual using them will have to select them.

Teachers and parents or spouses can model good organizational behaviour by perhaps being more explicit about what they are doing, while they are doing it.

Often the organization of materials requires a coach (mental health worker, teacher, parent or spouse) to sit down and help the individual set goals, break up tasks, and develop systems to manage materials.

Set aside time for organization in the daily schedule.

Adapted from Ylvisaker and colleagues (1998)