

Getting and staying organized



Developing organizational strategies reduces stress, maximizes time on task and allows students to participate more fully in learning activities.

Choose the statement below that best describes how this student manages getting and staying organized. This will help you identify a starting point for selecting strategies (e.g., 1=specialized, 2=targeted, 3=universal).

- 1. Requires one-to-one assistance to ensure school work is organized and materials are available for use when needed
- 2. Requires frequent (i.e., more than three times per day) adult reminders and specific strategies to organize school work and ensure materials are available when needed
- 3. Requires occasional (e.g., one to two times a week) reminders and general strategies to help organize school work and ensure materials (e.g., pencil, binder, books) are available when needed



Universal Supports benefit all students

- Help students develop an understanding of the importance of getting and staying organized through class discussion, brainstorming benefits of being organized and modelling good classroom organization.
- Develop **classroom routines** that promote and facilitate getting and staying organized by providing step-by-step procedures for frequent classroom tasks, such as organizing materials and supplies, keeping organized notebooks and binders, recording homework and taking home what you need to complete assignments.
- Teach, practise and review these routines and strategies with students at beginning of school year and at regular intervals throughout the year. Model and practise each strategy. Start with one-to-three steps and gradually add more steps.
- Post **visual reminders** of the importance of getting and staying organized. When appropriate, collaborate with students to develop these visual reminders.
- Model the use of organizational strategies throughout the school day by using think alouds to direct students' attention (e.g., "I want to remind myself to _____ so I will make a note to myself on my to-do list.").
- Use descriptive feedback to reinforce individual students, groups of students and/or the whole class when they demonstrate organizational skills.





Targeted Supports benefit students with more specific needs

- Pair individual students with positive peers who can serve as role models and provide support for getting and staying organized. Rotate these peers at regular intervals throughout the school year.
- Provide proximity by positioning yourself nearby individual students who may require support and encouragement in organizing for certain tasks and activities.
- Work with individual students to develop low-key **cues and prompts** to remind the student to get or stay organized.
- Provide personalized visual checklists for routines related to getting and staying organized and post them on the students' desks where they can see and use them independently. Some students may wish to carry the checklists with them. When possible, include graphics or actual photos of students.
- Encourage the use of **self-talk** as students follow the checklists.
- Develop **self-monitoring strategies** students can use to reflect on and keep track of how well they are using their organizational skills and strategies.
- Set up a systematic approach to **reinforcement** for students who are working on improving their organizational skills. Reinforcement should encourage moving toward intrinsic motivation (e.g., "How does it feel when ...?").

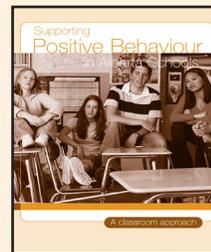
Parents know their children well and can offer insights on how to support their social and emotional well-being. There is strength in collaborating on strategies that could be used at home, at school and in the community.



Specialized Supports benefit the small number of students with sensory, physical, cognitive or behavioural needs that require intensive, individualized interventions

- In exceptional cases, an individual student may need 1:1 adult support to facilitate participation in classroom routines, learning activities and social interactions with other students. This support should be provided as unobtrusively as possible. In addition, the adult providing this 1:1 should collaborate with the student's learning team to identify and facilitate how organizational skills and strategies might help this student experience increased levels of participation and independence throughout the school day.

For more information and strategies, see:



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(Keyword: Positive Behaviour Support)

