



Happier | Healthier | Hopeful

Organisation strategies

There are a number of reasons why children may have difficulty organising themselves, their work and their belongings. These include:

- Poor body and spatial awareness (see 'motor planning' and 'sensory processing' advice sheets)
- Lower than expected understanding level or difficulty processing language (this may not always be evident as children are often able to develop strategies to mask these difficulties but it may still impact on their ability to follow instructions and organise themselves to carry out physical activities). If this may be the case consult with a Speech and Language Therapist or Specialist Advisory Teacher
- Some children have difficulty screening out un-needed information from the environment around them and so it makes it difficult for them to identify the information or instructions that are important in order for them to organise and carry out activities

Strategies and advice

Primary school

- Break routines that the child is having difficulty following into sections and use a picture or written checklist e.g. Pack up time; tidy up, check homework, collect messages, collect coat and bag.
- Use colours to show where to start and finish work on a page for children who start writing in the middle of the page
- When writing on a white board ensure that it is clear of un-needed or old information and use colours and sections
- Make sure the child is sitting where they can see the board and the teacher
- Provide worksheets and alternative ways of working and recording work
- Minimise, as far as is practically possible, the amount of additional visual material you have hanging from the ceiling or on the walls.
- Help desk organisation with a picture template of where each item inside the desk belongs or have stencil outlines on the desk-top for placement of essential stationary items e.g. pencil, ruler and rubber.
- Tape a number or letter line directly onto the child's desk if they get distracted when using the one on the board or wall.
- Consider the places where the child works well, for example in a corner of a room or with the desk facing a wall.
- Ensure that the child is looking at the chosen activity before you start and reinforce verbally for example, "Good Looking". Keep prompting their attention verbally and they may need prompting to slow down in their approach to an activity.



- Ensure that the child is looking at the person who is giving verbal instructions. Deliver instructions for all activities in a concise way, perhaps with some firm contact whilst speaking, for example a hand on the child's shoulder or back.
- Encourage the child to feedback verbally the task which you have asked them to do.
- It is important to involve the child in the selection of the strategies which will be used and that the approach is consistent at home and in school. Reduce the frequency of support and prompts when the child no longer requires them and becomes confident in using the strategies, remembering that, as adults, we all use checklists, diaries, highlighters etc.

Secondary school

- Use a colour coded homework diary with a different colour for each lesson corresponding to timetables, homework and books
- Duplicate these timetables to keep in lots of different places
- Use pictures or checklists as a reminder of what to bring to school/lessons at home and in school and try and pack bags the night before
- Wherever possible, leave items in school in a consistent place such as a locker
- Use a highlighter to highlight key sentences in a large amount of writing
- Encourage your child to try and sit where they can clearly see the board and the teacher
- Have a folder with sections to keep loose worksheets organised



If you would like this factsheet in another language or format, for example Braille, large print or audio, please call:

01228 603890

E: communications.helpdesk@cumbria.nhs.uk

Or write to Engagement and Communications
Voreda House | Portland Place | Penrith | CA11 7QQ



Happier | Healthier | Hopeful