

ADHD and How to Get Things Organized

An important component of how to manage life with **ADHD** is how to get things organized and how to keep them organized. Children, teenagers, and adults with ADHD all frequently complain that they can't seem to "get things together" and often children will say, "but I am trying my hardest". Whether you are dealing with a child at school that is unable to stay organized and their back pack is a mess, their homework is not written down, or they are simply not turning their homework in or if you are an adult and your life at work and home seems to be a disaster because you are unable to get organized and set priorities, **ORGANIZATION**, is a key element in making life run much more smoothly. The most successful people (children/teenagers and adults) are those that are able to have organization in their life.

Here are a number of ways that anyone can organize their life to be much more successful:

1. Develop goals for yourself each day, week, month and stick to them. Everything is easier to do if you write it down. Don't fly by the seat of your pants. Make your goals clear and concise. For example, a goal for a child could be simply to turn in their homework each day and write their homework in a special agenda.
2. Decide what you are going to spend your time doing. I hear way too many teens and adults spending their time on video games, television, or on the computer. These will not usually get you towards your target goals. TV, etc... are supposed to be for a limited period of time, not your entire evening. If you are spending hours playing video games or watching TV, then you are probably not meeting your goals.
3. Decide what is important to you and prioritize your time. If your goal is to make good grades, then studying or reading would be a better investment of your time. If you want to make money, then working is a better decision on how to spend your time.
4. Schedule your time wisely. For example, make your errands or appointments on the same day. For children/teenagers, schedule a certain time each day to complete homework or assignments. Be consistent and structured, don't keep changing the time you are going to do homework.
5. Write everything down. I hear over and over from children and adults, I don't have to write it down, I will remember. No you won't!! Nobody can remember everything. Get a notebook and write down your to do's list each day. Children should keep a notebook in their back pack of all of their assignments and pertinent information.
6. Remember use your time wisely. Some tasks you know take a certain amount of time and if you are taking too long, maybe there is a problem. Set a time limit of how long tasks take you. For example, writing down spelling words for a child should not take an hour or more.
7. Prioritize what is most important. Everybody is so busy, that most of us can not get everything done in a day. Decide what you want to work on first and work at that one thing until it is done. Do NOT start another project until the first one is done or otherwise you end up having a bunch of incomplete projects. You know who you are!!

8. Make a deadline for how long something should take to get done. This can be used for children, teenagers, and adults. For young children, parents are able to help decide how long a project should take.
9. Set boundaries. Over and over, we spread ourselves too thin!! It really is alright to tell someone, “No, I don’t have time to do that.” Work with people on when you are able to help them with something or go somewhere with them. No one can do everything, even though we try.
10. Life is not simply about school and work. Everyone needs to schedule time to have fun. If you are blocking out time to work, then you need to block out time to have fun too!! Schedule all of your activities, you can’t stay organized if you are doing things haphazardly.
11. A work area should not be scattered with papers, etc... A child’s room should not look like a bomb went off in there. No one can be organized if where they are trying to work is in disarray. Keep things neat and clean, a mess does not help the ADHD mind!!
12. Break down large tasks into smaller chunks. No one wants to start a project whether it is a child or an adult when the project seems too large and overwhelming to tackle. If a project can’t be done in a day, then schedule each piece of a project over a period of time ie... a week to complete a science project at school.

Kara T. Tamanini, M.S., LMHC
Author and Therapist
Founder of Kids Awareness Series
www.KidsAwarenessSeries.com

Kara T. Tamanini is a licensed therapist that works with children/adolescents on a variety of childhood mental disorders.