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Improving organisational skills

Points to note

- Children with autism tend to have poor executive functioning skills. This means the student might have difficulty with organisation, task sequencing, planning, prioritising and getting started.
- The child may become easily overloaded and confused by having to cope with the social demands of school life. Increased anxiety will affect his ability to organise himself.
- The child may not see the point of being well organised as he may have little motivation to please others or master new skills.
- The child may have particular difficulty remembering which items to bring from home and what he needs to take home each day, the materials required for certain classes, knowing where to put answers on a work sheet and finding his way around the school.

What you can do

- The child will benefit from having a map of the school. You could use highlighters to color-code play areas, home room, canteen, etc.
- Use a book or diary to record details of homework assignments. This should clearly state what is expected as well as listing the books and resources needed to fulfil the requirements. Have the child's parents check and sign the book and copy important dates on to a calendar.
- Encourage the child to use a calendar at home (preferably one related to his special interest) as a constant visual reminder of important dates, assignments due etc.
- Talk to the child's parents about providing a suitable place at home for the child to complete his homework. It is essential for a child with autism to have a space that is free from distractions.
- It is important that children with autism have time to 'unwind' at the end of the day so you may need to lower your expectations regarding the amount of homework the child is required to do. You could even set aside some class time for the child to complete a homework assignment. See also [Homework](#).
- Use a visual or written timetable that shows the items that are required for each lesson.
- Enlarge worksheets onto A3 size paper and using a highlighter, mark the spaces for each answer.
- Allocate a time each week for 'housekeeping' and a general tidy up of the student's work area, locker etc. The student may also benefit from having a larger locker if this is possible. While the extra space may assist with organisation, remember his executive functioning difficulties could make him incapable of determining which materials are essential, useful or unnecessary, so he may need assistance with this.

- A child with autism may need some help getting started with an activity. A physical prompt may be necessary. Or you could provide a list sequencing the tasks to reach the goal of the activity.