



Planning and Organisation

Tips for Success





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An Introduction to Planning and Organisation

Many people have difficulty with daily tasks, particularly with time management and general planning and organisation.

What are organisational skills?

- The ability to plan for the day ahead
- To prepare for individual tasks
- To identify the right tools for the job/ task
- To effectively carry out the task
- To be successful in completing the task

How do we do this?

- Identify what the task is
- Who has to do it?
- What do you need?
- Where is it to be done?
- When is it to be completed by and how long will it take to complete?

Which skills do we need to help us to plan our 'school' day?

- Packing/unpacking bag
- Preparing for timetabled subjects
- Making sure that you have the required books for each subject
- Check that you have the required tools for practical subjects
- Following timetable
- Finding your way around school
- Getting to transport on time

What can help us to plan and organise ourselves?

- Visual Prompts e.g. notes, pictures, photographs etc.
- Planner/diary
- Calendar
- Timetable
- Visual Schedules
- Environmental Prompts e.g. labelling cupboards, drawers



Sometimes simple, straightforward ideas can help to make life easier, both at home and in school.

This book contains a variety of ideas which you might find useful. It may require a bit of trial and error to find out what works for you, as we are all different, and what works for one person doesn't necessarily work for another. But remember, that putting in a bit of time and effort now, can give you strategies which may make your life a whole lot easier, and please try to remember this helpful mathematical equation:

[Good Planning] + [Organisation] = [Less Stress] =



(Happy Bunny!)

Whilst reading through the book, remember to look out for the



Handy tips.

You can also work through the activity tasks to help you with your own planning and organisation skills.



Organisation within the Home

Some people naturally develop good organisational skills, however, many don't. Organisation starts at home and there are many opportunities that you can use to practice these skills. Regardless of whether you are at home, school or out in the community you will need to be able to organise yourself. We have put together some suggestions that you may find useful when developing these skills.

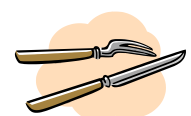
Your Bedroom

- Identify a place or container for each belonging, so it is easy to find.
- Arrange drawers so items are clearly separated – use dividers or baskets.
- Place photos or labels on the outside of drawers/cupboards to indicate their contents
- Mark clothing so it is clearly but subtly identifiable (e.g. a piece of coloured thread sewn into the back of the clothing)
- Try laminating a list or putting it in a plastic sleeve, then use wipe-off markers so you can check off items on the list when you complete each task (e.g. dressing, bedtime routine or morning routine). Initially, you may need prompting from your parent through this list. Over time, you should take more responsibility for working through the list, and will learn the routine (attached is an example of a checklist you could use)
- If you are having difficulty remembering or performing certain routines, draw pictures of each particular step and post them in relevant areas. (e.g. These pictures might include someone putting their boots away, hanging up their coat and then putting their shoes or slippers on.)
- Try and stick to a regular routine as this will allow you to learn to do things in a predictable sequence.



Kitchen

Whether it is getting yourself a drink, making snack or even making a meal you will need to be able to organize yourself in the kitchen. We have put together some useful tips so support you in increasing your independence in this area.



- Try to have set places for each item and try to not change around where you keep things.
- Put labels or picture on the doors to remind your of where things are (these can be gradually taken away once you get used to the system)
- Try to keep worktops as clear as possible to remove unnecessary distractions
- Have laminated lists of the items required and sequences you need to follow to carry out things you do in the kitchen most often i.e. getting a drink, making a sandwich
- Try to take part in activities with another family member so they can support you initially in working on these skills.
- Try to keep to a regular routine for mealtimes i.e. setting the table and getting all necessary items out that you will need.
- Ask your parent to help you to structure the task so that it is possible to proceed in a step-by-step manner. Work alongside them the first few times that you undertake a new responsibility. (e.g. setting the table, cleaning your room, making your lunch etc.)



Timing Daily Routines

The concept of time can be difficult for children to understand, because it is so abstract.

A sense of time is learned gradually as children live their lives and mark various events e.g., birthdays, school holidays, weekends, bedtimes, lunchtimes, etc. As they experience the world of people and things, their concept of time becomes part of their everyday lives.

It can be difficult for children to understand how much time daily tasks may take. For example, when thinking of how much time it would take to get ready for high school in the morning, one child gave the following details:

Morning Task	Time Taken
Get up	7.30
Get dressed	7.30 - 7.32
Have breakfast	7.32 - 7.34
Watch TV	7.34 - 8.45
Go for the bus	8.45 - 8.50
Get to school	8.55

As you can see above, the child in this example has significantly under estimated time required for each step and missed out essential steps. Do they get washed? Brush their hair? Brush teeth? Have they prepared for school the night before? Is their bag packed and ready to pick up before running out of the front door? If not, their routines may need to be changed. Nobody likes to have to run around in the morning, trying to remember what they are doing that day and having to find books and equipment for school at the last minute.

Try to prepare in advance!!

TASK 1

Take time now, to think about how long it takes you to get ready for school. Perhaps have one day where you can write down how long it takes to do all the tasks you have to do in the morning, from the time you get up, to the time you leave the house for school. How long does it take you to get to school? I bet it takes longer than you think!

You can use the blank table provided on the next page.



Morning Task	Time Taken

How did you do?

Did it take you longer than you thought to get ready in the morning?

What helps you to get ready in the morning? _____

Do you plan ahead, or do you leave everything until the last minute or, do you hope that someone else will do it all for you?!

When you go to high school you will have more subjects to study, which will mean that you will have more books and equipment to pack and carry to school, and you will have more homework to do. So planning ahead is very important. **Remember**.....

[Good Planning] + [Organisation] = [Less Stress] =  (Happy Bunny!)



Planning Your Day

If you found Task 1 difficult it might be helpful to think about exactly what you have to do in the mornings before you go to school.

The list underneath shows the kinds of things you might have to do.

Using a list of tasks you need to complete in the morning may be helpful to help you get ready for school in time. This can be laminated and if you use a dry wipe marker then it can be reused every day.

Below is a list of the kind of tasks you may have to do in the morning:

- Have a shower
- Wash hair
- Get dried
- Put on deodorant
- Get dressed
- Have breakfast
- Wash & dry the plate, bowl and mug, then put them away
- Clean teeth
- Brush or comb hair
- Check school diary and make sure you've packed everything for today
- Take packed lunch out of the fridge and put it in your bag. Or put school dinner money in your bag
- Make sure that you have your keys, money, bags, mobile phone with you
- Put on coat, shoes, hat/gloves etc.
- Leave home, close the door and lock up



Morning Routine



TASK 2a

Use this blank list to write down the tasks you have to do before you go to school. Then you can tick off the tasks as you complete them.

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-
-



Bedtime Routine

Once you have thought about planning your morning, you can do the same for your evening/ bedtime routine. You should try to be as organised as possible before you go to bed for the morning as this will save you time and save you running around at the last minute trying to get everything you need for the day ahead.

Here is an example:

- Make up or help make a packed lunch for tomorrow and keep it in the fridge. Or ask for your lunch money then put it in your school bag.
- Take off clothes and either have a bath or shower, or wash your hands and face. Put on nightwear.
- Brush your teeth.
- Put dirty clothes in washing basket (underwear, socks).
- Hang up clothes that are still clean (trousers, skirt).
- Get clean underwear and clothes for tomorrow and hang them up carefully.
- Turn off TV, radio, computer.
- Check school planner diary and see what is planned for tomorrow.
- Put any equipment or books needed into your school bag.
- Set your alarm clock to the time you should wake up in the morning.



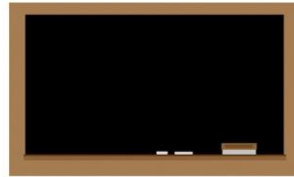
Bedtime Routine



TASK 2b

Use this blank list to write down the tasks you have to do before you go to bed. Then you can tick off the tasks as you complete them.

-
-
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-



My New School

Now that you have been able to think of how long it takes to get ready for school, perhaps you can complete this form to help you plan your average school day.

My first day at my new school is _____ (day) _____ August 20__
(If it helps you to plan and organise, you can put this date on a calendar).

I need to get up at _____ am

I need to leave for school at _____ am

I will travel to school by _____

School starts at _____ am

School breaks are at _____ am, _____ pm, _____ pm

School finishes at _____ pm

School address is: _____

School telephone number is _____

My Head Teacher is _____

My Registration Teacher is _____

My Guidance Teacher is _____



Helping Yourself

The best person to start sorting out a problem or worry is **you**.

Sometimes other people might not know that you need help because you haven't told them that you have a problem, or that something is worrying you.

Task 3

It's hard when you first start a new school and don't know people well, but it can make things easier if you practice asking for help, and think about the best way to explain to someone the problems you are having. Try working through these questions.

Have you or your friends had any problems in school?

What did you/your friend do about it?

Who did you/your friend talk to?

Did this help you/your friend?

What kind of problems might you have in High School?

Who could you go to for help?

In most High schools you will be allocated a guidance teacher, or there will be a head of year that you can ask for help or advice. Schools often give you these details in a handbook. If not, ask during your transition visits with your primary school.

Don't forget that family members and friends can help you too, so don't keep problems to yourself.....

IF IN DOUBT ASK FOR HELP!

[Good Planning] + [Organisation] = [Less Stress] =



(Happy Bunny!)



General Tips for Organising and Planning for School

Many people have difficulty with daily tasks, particularly with time management, general planning and organisation. Sometimes simple, straight forward ideas can help make life easier at home and school. This sheet provides some practical ideas and strategies which you may find useful.

Many people experience difficulties when trying to organise themselves in daily life, particularly with time management, generally planning and organisation. Sometimes simple ideas and changes in your process can make all the difference to your home and school life. You may need support from your parents and teachers to put the following ideas into practice but don't be afraid to ask for help. The following gives you some practical ideas and strategies which you can try to see if you find them useful.

1. **Always plan ahead** and try not to leave things to the last minute e.g. prepare work, pack your bag and lay out school clothes the night before.

2. **Set your alarm clock** for the same time every school day (and get out of bed!!) as this can help you become better organised.



3. **Use your school planner / diary** to remind you of any homework you may have and when it has to be handed in. Remember to put in other information such as school trips, appointments, exams and most importantlyholidays!! If you find it hard to write everything down a Dictaphone may be useful to help you record information quickly.



4. **Use coloured Post-it notes** to remind yourself of important tasks. You can also use mini post-its to put into your books to remind you which page you're working on.



5. **Transparent pencil cases and purses/ wallets** allow you to find pencils, pens, money etc. more easily.



6. **Colour code your school timetable and exercise books** to help you pack your school bag more easily. Colour coded timetables can make it easier to see which subjects you have each day (further details are included in this book).



7. **Use visual, pictorial planners** to ensure that you have the equipment you may need each day. Sometimes looking at pictures can make it easier to organise yourself (further details are included in this book).

8. **Make out a 'To Do' list** to remind you what and when things have to be done, then cross things off as you complete them. You should make sure that your list is achievable as if it is too long it may de-motivate you



9. If you find it difficult to remember where things are kept in your room, you can put labels, pictures or photographs onto your drawers and cupboards, as a **visual reminder**.



10. Lay out your school clothes the night before.

11. **Always allow 'extra time'** to complete tasks as it usually takes longer than you would think!

12. **Don't take everything for every subject for school.** Make sure you only take what you need for the subjects you will have on that day.

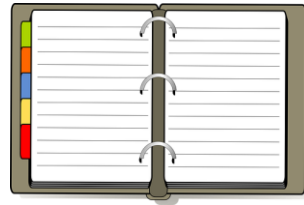


13. **Identify a place in the house for storing your school books** which can be kept in an orderly fashion thus making finding them again easier.



Don't panic! Lots of people find planning and organisation a bit of a nightmare at times and we all use different strategies to cope. Plan ahead as much as possible and **don't be afraid to ask for help** if you are having difficulties.





Using Your Daily Timetable/Planner

You may already have your new school timetable. It is very important that you check your timetable regularly as it will tell you things such as:

- Which lessons you have.
- Which room the lesson will be held in.
- Which teacher will take the lesson
- What time the lessons starts and ends.
- What equipment you might need e.g....PE



Handy Tip - You will need to change classrooms regularly throughout the day and you need to get to each lesson on time. If you don't have a watch, it would be a good idea to buy one. If you buy one with an alarm it can remind you of any important times throughout the day. It can also wake you up in the morning!!!

Task 4

a) Have a look at your timetable, or if you don't have your new timetable yet, use the black and white table on the next page, to and see if you can answer these questions:

- What days do you have P.E?
- What equipment do you need for Tuesday's lessons?
- When is your favourite lesson?

Some people like the simple black and white timetables that the schools provide, others find that a colour coded timetable can be much easier to follow and can help them to plan more easily.

b) Now answer the same questions using the colour coded timetable on page 18.

How was that? Did you notice any difference when using the different timetables? Did you manage to find the subjects any quicker when you used the colour coded one?



Handy Tip - perhaps you could colour code your timetable when you start school? If you or someone in your house is good with computers, you can do this yourselves. If not, please ask your Occupational Therapist for assistance.



Black and White Timetable

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mon	Science	Music	CFE	Social Subjects	English	PE	Maths
Tue	Art	RE	Maths	Maths	English	Spanish	Music
Wed	PE	PE	I.T.	Maths	Tech	RE	
Thur	Home Ecc	Science	English	Social Subjects	Maths	Music	Spanish
Fri	Art	Science	Social Subjects	Tech	English	Spanish	



Colour Coded Timetable

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mon	Science	Music	CFE	Social Subjects	English	PE	Maths
Tue	Art	RE	Maths	Maths	English	Spanish	Music
Wed	PE	PE	I.T.	Maths	Tech	RE	
Thur	Home Ecc	Science	English	Social Subjects	Maths	Music	Spanish
Fri	Art	Science	Social Subjects	Tech	English	Spanish	



Packing Your School Bag

You will have a lot more to take to school so plan ahead and
'PACK YOUR BAG THE NIGHT BEFORE'!



Handy Tip - You may have to cover your exercise books. If not, they will probably all be the same colour, which can make it difficult to find the right book when packing your bag.

Colour coding your books to match your timetable can make things a lot easier when you are packing your bag. You can make up coloured labels to stick onto the spine of your exercise book.

Figure1. Non- coloured coded books



Figure 2. Colour coded books



An example of the colour coded labels are shown on the next page. Again, if you or someone at home can do this, great...if not please ask your therapist for assistance.

TASK 5

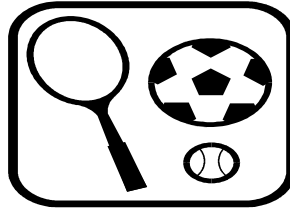
Do a trial run of packing your bag. Using the colour coded timetable, check to see what you need to pack for example, on a Wednesday? Don't forget you may need lunch money or packed lunch. Money for the school bus, house keys or a mobile phone.



School Bag – What to Pack?

Tick off the items as you pack them.....

1. Planner/ diary.....
2. Pencil case.....
3. Bottle of water/juice.....
4. Exercise Books.....
5. P.E Kit.....
6. Lunch money.....
7. Bus Pass.....
8. Snack.....
9. Homework.....
10. Packed Lunch.....



Equipment for Physical Education (P.E) - What to Pack?

Tick off the items as you pack them.....

1. Training shoes.....
2. T-shirt.....
3. Shorts.....
4. Swimming Trunks.....
5. Swimsuit.....
6. Goggles.....
7. Towel.....



Pencil Case Contents - What to Pack?

Tick off the items as you pack them.....

1. Pencil.....
2. Ruler.....
3. Pen.....
4. Rubber.....
5. Coloured pens / pencils.....
6. Pencil Sharpener.....
7. Scissors / Glue.....
8. Paper Clips.....
9. Compass / Protractor.....
10. Calculator.....
11. Stapler.....
12. Sticky Tape.....



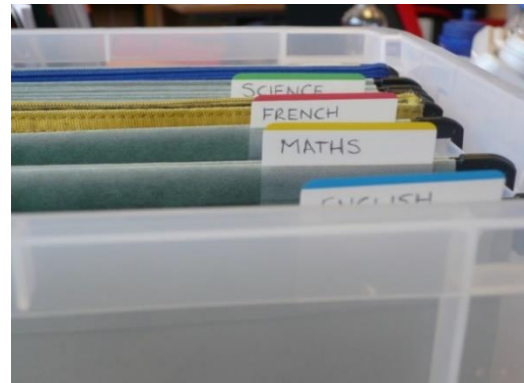
I know it's here somewhere!

If you find it difficult to keep all of your exercise books and papers together, and you often lose homework sheets and information leaflets, this system might work for you.

The plastic box below contains suspension files where you can store all of the information for each subject separately, exercise books, homework sheets etc...

You can attach a copy of your colour coded timetable to the lid, then colour code and label each section so that you can find the appropriate information quickly and easily!

If you place a zip up folder in each section, all you have to do is lift the folder out when you are packing your bag. You then know you have all of the information for a particular subject with you.





Visual Planners and To Do Lists

Unless you have an exceptional memory, you will probably rely on something, or someone to remind you of the jobs you have to do every day.

When you move up to High school you will have a lot of different subjects to study. In primary school most of the equipment you need during your day is probably provided for you, in High school you will have to take more equipment with you each day. A 'to do' list or visual planner might help with this as you may have a lot of extra equipment to pack each day.

Most people rely on lists, notes, or diaries to remind them of what needs to be done and when it has to be completed. You will have to use your diary/ planner in school to record which homework you have and when it has to be handed in.

As we discussed at the beginning of the book, everyone has different ways of working and no single way suits everyone. We have put together various ideas of the different visual planners and lists which you may find helpful.

Some people prefer a written 'To do' list, others may prefer to put up photographs or pictures. Again, if you feel that you would like to try one of these ideas, and you are able to do this at home.....great, but if not ask your therapist for help.

Have a look and see what you think!

Visual Planners Using Photographs



As you can see, this planner uses photographs of the equipment that Jack needs to take to school with him. It also reminds him to check his planner. The pictures are laminated, and then stuck onto the planner using a small piece of Velcro. When Jack has completed a task, he then peels off the picture, revealing a tick to confirm that he's done the job, before he moves onto the next task.





Packing Your School Bag

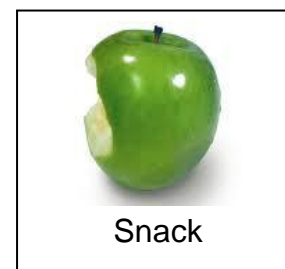
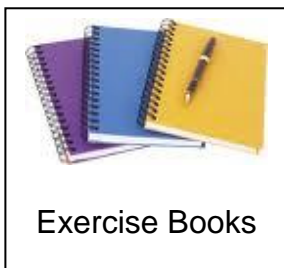
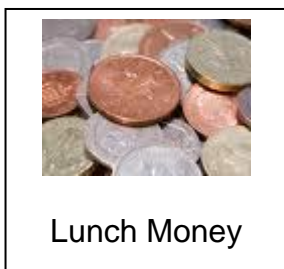
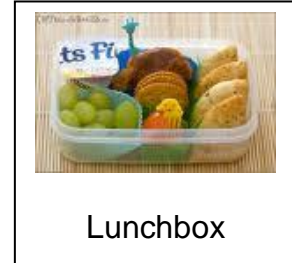
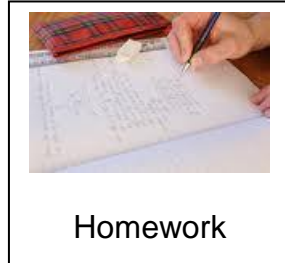
Key Fob Reminder



Handy tip - If you find it difficult to remember to pack all of your equipment at the end of each lesson or just need a reminder of what to pack into your bag generally, you could try using a key ring like the one above. The pictures are laminated then placed on a key ring, which can then be attached to your school bag. You don't have to use photographs; you can use printed words if you prefer.

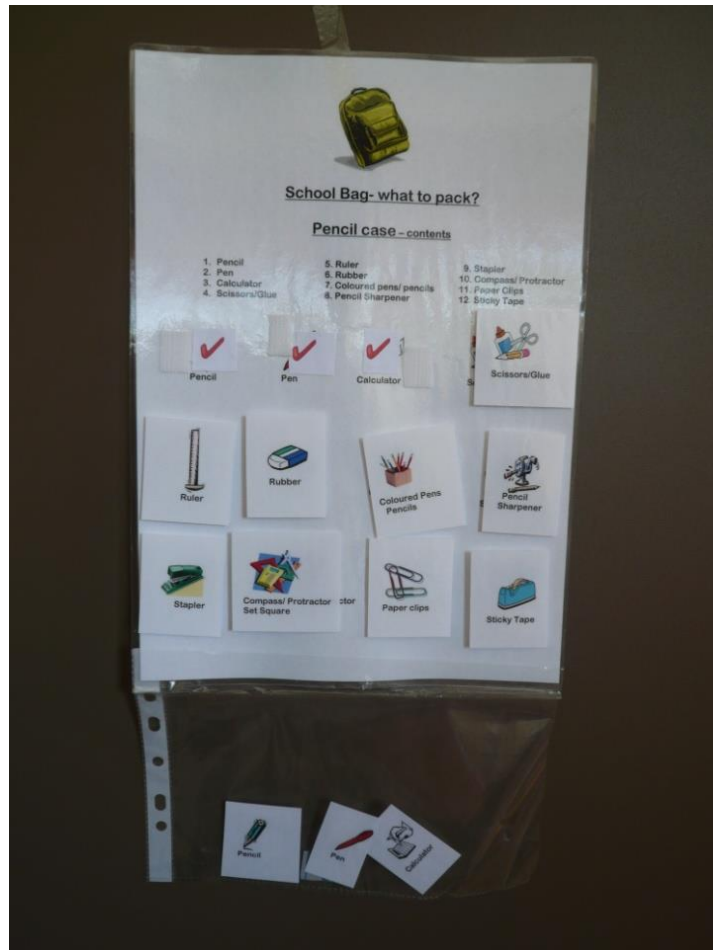


Pictures for Key Ring Reminder



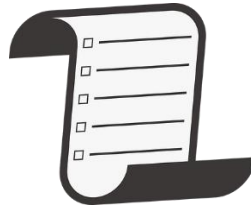
Packing Your School Bag

Large Visual Planner



This planner has a plastic pocket attached to its base so that when you have packed an item into your bag you can remove the relevant picture and place it in the pocket. It helps to keep everything in one place and organised!

The following pages contain planners and 'to do' lists which you may find useful. If you want to try using them you can laminate them, then using a wipeable marker you can tick off items as you pack them, or complete tasks.



THINGS TO DO

THIS WEEK

No.	Things to do	Target Date	Tick when done

Remember, WRITE IT!

TO HELP YOU REMEMBER IT!



What Helps You Work?

Everyone has different ways of working. Some people like to have the TV on, or have music playing while they work. Others prefer it to be quiet. Some people can work when there's a lot going on around them, while others are very easily distracted and need a quiet, clutter free area in order to be able to concentrate.

It is important to work out the things that you need to help you to study.

TASK 6

Sit down and think about the conditions that you need when you are doing your homework.

- Do you like to have background music playing, or the TV on?
- Do you prefer it to be quiet?
- Can you work when there is a lot going on around you?
- Do you need a snack or a drink?

Once you have thought about the conditions you need to help you work, think about **how** you might be able to organise things at home, in order to help you work.

- Where can you work?
- When's the best time to do homework?
- If the house is very busy, are there times when it is slightly quieter?
- Talk to your family about where and when you need to work.



Workstations

If you have difficulty concentrating, can't focus on your work, and need a quiet, clutter free place to work, you might like to think about setting up a work station, either in school, at home, or both.

What is a workstation?



A workstation is a small area where you can work with as little distraction as possible.

A table can be placed facing a blank wall and screened off from the rest of the room. There should be nothing on the table or the walls (but you may like to have a visual planner or 'to do' list, so that you know which tasks have to be completed?).

If possible, it is usually better to place the station away from windows and doors where there are more distractions. Any necessary equipment should be accessible but not on or under the desk. You can see from the picture above, that this station has trays placed to the side. The trays can then be colour coded. It can be helpful to have 1 tray to store work which has to be done, and a tray where you can store work when it has been completed.

It is always worth remembering that a distraction free space is often calming and can make it easier to concentrate.





Workstations – General Information

Children with Autism

A child with Autism may become anxious in a classroom designed to be stimulating to other children. People with autism often have some differences/difficulties with sensory processing. For some people with autism this can mean that colours, patterns, words, noises, textures etc can be so distracting for them that they are completely unable to focus on anything else.

Being asked to listen, focus and attend when they are so distracted can be very anxiety provoking. This anxiety only increases the inability to work effectively and may result in challenging behaviour.

People with autism have found that having the opportunity to use a quiet workstation in a room can alleviate some of the difficulties described above and enable them to be more effective learners.

Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Much of the above is also true for children with ADHD.



Route Planning

You may be very familiar with the layout of your primary school and can now easily find your way around. You probably feel comfortable in your surroundings. However, you will almost certainly find that your new High school is larger.

Most people initially have concerns about how they are going to find their way around their new school and think about losing their way to classes.

Some High schools provide you with a lay out /map which guides you around the building. Even if you are provided with a map you might find it difficult to follow.

Don't worry, everyone will find it difficult to find their new classes at first and you can all help each other to find your way around.

If you know that you can sometimes find it difficult to find your way around new places. You can practice your orientation skills by trying out some of the following activities.

Task 7

Can you draw a plan of your house? Or if you find this too difficult, can someone draw it for you and you can try to label/name each room. (You can use the house plans on the next page to guide you)

Once you have a plan of your house, can you describe to someone for example, how you would get from your bathroom to your kitchen?

Using **Map 1** on the next page can you describe how to get from the garage to the deck, then from the patio to the kitchen?

Can you look at a local street map and find your street and your school. Using the street map can you find your route to school, then show a member of your family how to get there?

Can you describe to someone, how you would find your way to your friend's house, either by walking or when going by car?



Handy tips- Plan out your route to school and have a trial run, before you begin in August.



Drawing a Plan of Your house

Here is an example of a house plan, it may help to give you an idea of how to draw plans for your house.

MAP 1



MAP 2





Improving Your Recording Skills

Handwriting is a complex task. Many people have difficulty recording their work.

Factors to consider when you have handwriting difficulties:

Ensure that you are sitting in the best position possible before writing.

Seating Posture

How NOT to sit

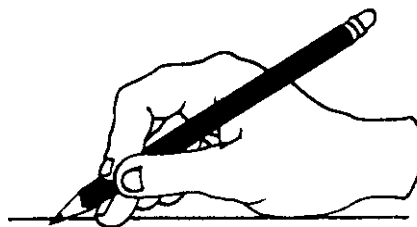


Good sitting for writing and table top work



Pencil Grip

The way in which you grip your pen is important. Many professionals feel that you are best to use a tripod grip, when writing, but as long as you are comfortable, and don't experience, tired or sore hands when you write, and can record your work, effectively, try not to worry about it.



Tripod Grip



Pencil Control

If your pencil grip is either, too loose or too tight, and/or you lean too lightly or heavily on your pen when you write, you may have difficulty recording your work when you move up to High School. The following section lists some of the strategies and ideas, which may help to make things a little easier for you.

Helping With Handwriting

There is a huge variety of specialist equipment which you can buy, either from your local stationary shop or more specialist suppliers. Here are a few ideas for you.

Pen / Pencil Grips



Tripod Grips



Chubbi or Ultra Grips



Writing Claw



Stubbi Grips (pink above)



Pens

Again, there is a huge variety of pens designed to give you a better, more comfortable grip. Here are a few ideas.



Yoropen – has an adjustable grip and good finger support. It can help if you tend to smudge your writing, particularly if you are left handed.



Twist 'n' Write / Tripod Pen

You can buy pens and pencils with built in grips from your local stationary shop.



Writing Aids

Studies have shown that using a sloping desk top, may significantly improve a person's written work.



Thumb wraps can help to hold a pen or paint brush in the correct position.

If you find it difficult to keep work from slipping around when you are writing, ask your therapist about trying a piece of dycem non-slip matting.



As you can see, we all need help with our planning and organisation at times!!!

As discussed throughout the planning and organisation book, we all work in different ways. We hope that some of the strategies and ideas which are offered here, may be of some use to you.....give things a try.....and remember.....

[Good Planning] + [Organisation] = [Less Stress] =



(Happy Bunny!)



Remember we are here to help. If you have any difficulties implementing any of the strategies or need further advice please do not hesitate to contact your local Occupational Therapist.

Thank you to the following who contributed to the production of this resource pack:

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