

## **The Kaizen “Top 3”**

***Recommendations to get you and your child on they way to a successful school year!***

### **TIP #1. The Kaizen Organizational System: KEEP IT SIMPLE!**

Your physical organization is reflective of how your brain is organizing ideas and thoughts. Researchers from Princeton University Neuroscience Institute (apparently they know a thing or two about brains!) used functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) and other physiological measurement tools to map the brain's responses to organized and disorganized situations to monitor task performance. The conclusions were strong — if you want to focus to the best of your ability and process information as effectively as possible, you need to clear the clutter from your home and work environment. This research shows that you will be less irritable, more productive, distracted less often, and able to process information better with an uncluttered and organized binder, locker, backpack and study space.

Your child's school often provides an extensive supply list of required items to be utilized throughout the course of the school year. However, in my experience, that list often contain items that your child will never or rarely use throughout the school year. Students are also expected to know **what to do** with each item on the list and are left to organize themselves. The average student carries 10-18 folders, notebooks, binders with them each day and many times, they are not even using the item! For many of our children (and parents!), managing all of this material is not only overwhelming on a daily basis, but a very inefficient system for our brains to handle, contributing to an overwhelming feeling of being scattered, cluttered and not productive. Based on current neuroscience research of how the brain works best, we've come up with a simplified system of organization that works! There's a place for everything and everything in it's place. It's easy, fast and efficient.

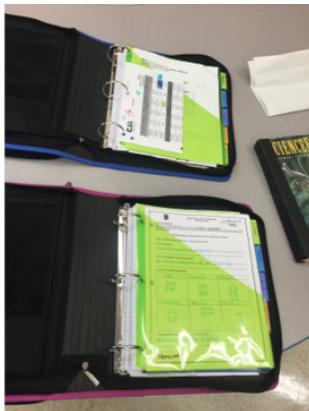
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*~an approach to one's personal or social life that focuses on continuous improvement*

**Here is a list of tried, tested and true items for you and your child to get started on turning THIS:**



**Into THIS:**



### **ORGANIZATIONAL SURVIVAL SUPPLY LIST**

- Paper Planner - the best one has one week on two pages and monthly calendar in the front or another good one is the weekly snapshot on a single page
- 1 Heavy duty binder clip to make the planner easy to use
- 1 to 2 Zipper Binders with built in file storage on the inside (they are expensive but are worth it!)
- Soft 3 ring pencil case with holes to store in binder

- Package of plastic dividers with **built in slide pocket** (AVERY #11903) **THESE ARE MORE EXPENSIVE THAN A STANDARD DIVIDER, BUT MAGIC! ONLY ONE NEEDED PER SUBJECT.**
- Table top file box & with 5-8 hanging file folders (one per subject)
- Timer for study blocks of no more than 20 mins. (old fashioned kitchen timer - avoid timers on phones/computers)
- **Unique** pens, pencils, erasers, rulers etc. (the more unique the better! This helps in retrieval of materials, returning lost goods to their proper owner, and assists as a conflict resolution strategy when there are accusations of 'stolen goods!')

### **SETTING UP AND USING THE SYSTEM**

1. In most cases, one zipper binder is enough, especially for students in elementary school or a semestered high school. However, in junior high, sometimes 2 binders is necessary. Choose the number of binders based on your child's schedule. If they have 7 subject periods a day, I would suggest two differently colored binders - one for math/science/CTS and one for humanities (SS, English, French, options etc). Or if they are NOT on a rotating schedule (Day 1, Day 2 etc), one binder for morning classes and one binder for afternoon classes works well).
2. Have ONE AVERY pocket divider clearly labelled for designated for each subject.
3. **Label "Homework / Immediate" on the front pocket of each divider** (a permanent 'Sharpie' pen works best here). This will be the place your child places **ONLY** their homework or work that need to be completed/accessed right away (current work). It's fast, doesn't require them to open the rings and keeps the work in the front of the mind!
4. The **rest of all current unit work** should be stored BEHIND the divider, in the rings.
5. The student carries this binder back and forth between school and home each day. It will zip up to avoid spillage and will only include their planner, pencil case, and all **essential** school materials (in other words, they should NOT be carrying the geometry set they only use in May/June! That can be purchased at a later date or stored in a locker or at home until it is required).
6. At the **end of each unit, the student removes** all completed material for that specific unit, sorts it into two piles: **"keep for later reference/review" and "recycle."** The 'keep for later reference/review' material is clamped/stapled together, labelled on the front

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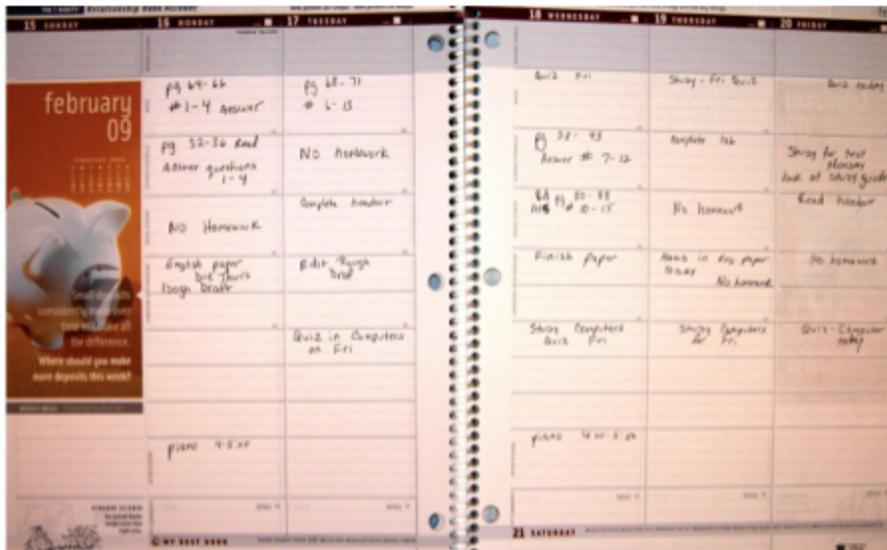
page with a big bold felt marker and then **moves to the stand up desktop file system at home.**

7. Please note: your child will **only be carrying current work in their binder** (avoiding heavy, bulging bags and lockers being used as filing cabinets!) while previous work is stored away for future reference/review. The cool thing about this system often reveals itself during exam weeks, when many students are scrambling to locate previous units and study guides. Your child will already have **instant study guides and review material for midterms/final exams, future projects etc.** Plus, by June, it is still in good shape, organized and easily retrievable!

## TIP #2. Apps to Support with Time Management & Planning

1. My favorite 'app' that has been the most successful with our students: **paper agendas! :)**

**The golden nugget here is to have 1 week, visible on ONLY 2 pages**



**If you or your child are set on using a digital tool, here are some excellent apps to utilize:**

2. Google Calendar, Google Drive  
3. Google Keep 
4. 30/30 
5. Gtasks 
6. ToDoist 
7. Taskboard 
8. Remember the Milk 

### **TIP #3: S.P.O.T: Sunday Planning Organizing Time**

***It only takes 15 mins a week but can save hours of time and stress!***

This meeting is an informal family gathering (usually on Sundays) where everyone in shares their schedules for the upcoming week (including parents). Sit down with your agendas for 15 minutes and have a team meeting. Your child writes down everything that involves THEM into their planner- the WHO, the WHAT, the WHERE and the WHEN. Discuss sports schedules, upcoming tests/projects, needed supplies, etc. This is a great time for students to take ownership of their schedules and parents to share if they will be working late one night or have other obligations that may impact the family.

***This is a great proactive technique for our children that don't respond well to change or surprise changes in scheduling. Many 'you didn't tell me!' frustrations are alleviated with S.P.O.T time.***

***This checklist can be used as a reminder during S.P.O.T time to make some plans for locker and backpack cleanup and organization.***

## Locker and Backpack Organization Checklist

#	Organization Item	Check if Complete
	<b>Lockers</b>	
1.	All trash is cleaned out of locker.	
2.	Morning books/binders are stored flat.	
3.	Afternoon books/binders are stored upright.	
4.	All books/binders are labeled on spine.	
5.	Binders can be color coded on spine.	
6.	Homework books/binders are placed on shelf or floor of locker with jacket as a reminder to take home.	
7.	Only items used for organization should be taking up space in locker. Rid locker of toys, hats, purses, etc.	
	<b>Book Bags</b>	
1.	All trash is cleaned out of the bottom of your bag.	
2.	Place handouts or papers in the pockets of your binder, not in the bottom of your book bag.	
3.	Keep keys and personal items in the same pocket of your book bag daily, so they will be easy to find.	
4.	Double check to make sure books, binders, planner, all homework and project supplies are in book bag at the end of the school day.	
5.	Before you go to bed at night, check your bag to make sure you have everything you need for school the next day.	