

Ten Neat Tips for Getting Your Family Organized

Do you have trouble getting your family organized? What you have learned to do without thinking about seems so simple to you. But we sometimes forget to communicate our needs clearly to our family. Following are ten tips to help get the entire family organized;

1. **Family Meetings.** Hold a family meeting and explain to your family that you need help maintaining the family home. You aren't the only person in the family and shouldn't be the only one doing all the work. However, don't expect everyone to know how to help, you will need to explain and suggest new methods. Ask for their input and listen to their suggestions. One of the advantages to the whole family working together to keep things organized and is that it takes less time, leaving you and your family more time to dedicate to fun activities together.
2. **Dividing the Chores.** One of the outcomes of your family meeting can be dividing the chores up. With input from each member of the family as to which chores they each prefer to do, set up a chore chart that lists everyone and the chores they are responsible for. All the jobs can be re-negotiated in the future but everyone likes to have a choice and this is a good way to do that.
3. **The Dirty Clothes Pile.** Does your spouse consistently toss his/her dirty clothing in a single spot on the floor? Help to get your better half to think organized by placing a hamper in the exact spot he/she tosses the dirty clothes. This way you are making it easier to 'think organized' without having to pick up piles of dirty clothes behind your spouse.
4. **Keep it Simple.** Do your children just toss their clothing into the closet without hanging it up? Or maybe even the floor? Sometimes the problem isn't that they don't want to do it right, but that they just can't. Is the closet rod too high for them to reach? Are the hangers too big for their clothing? Is the closet far from where they get changed? You can lower the hanging rod, introduce a clothes horse or buy smaller hangers to make it easier for them.
5. **Toys, toys and more toys.** Do you have toys all over the place with no one putting them away? If you have small children, make it easy for them. First, cut down the amount of toys. Many times, our children have far more toys than they can ever play with. Find their favorites, then pack up the rest. You could donate them, or just pack them up and store them to be rotated. Get rid of the toy box. Kids can't find anything in a toy box so they won't use it, or if they do, the mess from trying to find anything inside it spreads the mess all over the house. Use baskets or cubes and if your children are very small and aren't reading yet, use pictures to label each one so that they know exactly what goes where. When they know exactly where each toy belongs they are more able to keep the toys in order.
6. **Incentives.** We all need incentives! Use them in a smart way and remember that not all of them need to be monetary. They can be a favorite meal, a favorite movie or even a special day out with Mom or Dad. There are a number of rewards that will work. Very small children love to get stickers, treats or balloons. Older children enjoy quality time with Mom or Dad, or both. There are many ways that you can reward the family for getting organized. Experiment and find what works best for your finances and your family.

7. **Make it Fun.** None of us like to do chores including our children. Most people tend to put them off as long as possible, even to the point of avoiding them altogether. Young children enjoy the chore if it is more like a game, you can time them and let them improve their scores, use music and dance your way through, give everyone a specific time that it has to be finished by and make a winner of whoever finishes first. Use your imagination to make it fun!
8. **Change It Up.** When the family knows that they aren't stuck with a chore forever it makes it easier for them to take on a chore they don't particularly like. Making changes in the responsibilities, maybe once or twice a month, will enable you to assess how things are going and decide if you want to redistribute the chores.
9. **Declutter.** It is impossible to organize clutter, so if you have too much clutter, you need to lighten the load. Donate items that are in good condition or advertise them for sale on the internet. You can set it up so that each family member that sells something gets to keep the money for themselves or collect all the money from sales in one place and then use it for a fun activity for everyone. Give your family an incentive to part with things and they will be willing participants.
10. **Slow Down.** Introduce these suggestions slowly and when each one is a habit, start on a new one. You will have a home that requires less care, one because you have lightened the load, and two because the whole family is now taking part. This leaves you free to enjoy more family time together. Also remember, sometimes we get so focused on the things that need to be done that we forget to take the time to enjoy our families. Slow down and take some time to appreciate what you have!

