

Help Students Get and Stay Organized so They're Ready to Learn

Young people's lives are filled with clutter and distractions. With everything that has to be taught in school, being organized is one of the basic skills students need to master before they can begin to learn. Student-created checklists can teach young students the importance of setting goals and help them build organizational skills. With the assistance of a checklist, students can develop routines to help them stay on task during the busiest times of their day. And with some creativity, student-created checklists don't have to be just a reminder card taped to a desk. They can take the form of a placemat or a bookmark. They can be whatever you can imagine.

Think - Pair - Share:

Start a classroom discussion about the busiest times of your own day. Ask students to think about a time during the day when they feel rushed. Perhaps it's in the morning when they're getting ready for school or at classroom transition time? Introduce a morning checklist idea to the class. Ask students to think independently about what they would put on their own checklist to better organize their morning. Then pair up students to talk about each of their morning routines. Come back together, as a class, to share and record each pair's ideas.

Hands-On:

Ask each student to choose a time of day for which they think creating a checklist would help them stay organized. To make the lists, have items like decorative paper, colored pencils, markers, or stickers available. Encourage students to be creative when they make their lists. Suggest they use drawn shapes (a circle, square or star) or a small image for bullet points. Once completed, laminate the lists, or cover them with clear contact paper, so items can be checked off daily with an erasable dry erase marker.

