



CY-FAIR  
**FAMILIES**  
ARE  
CLEARING  
THE CLUTTER

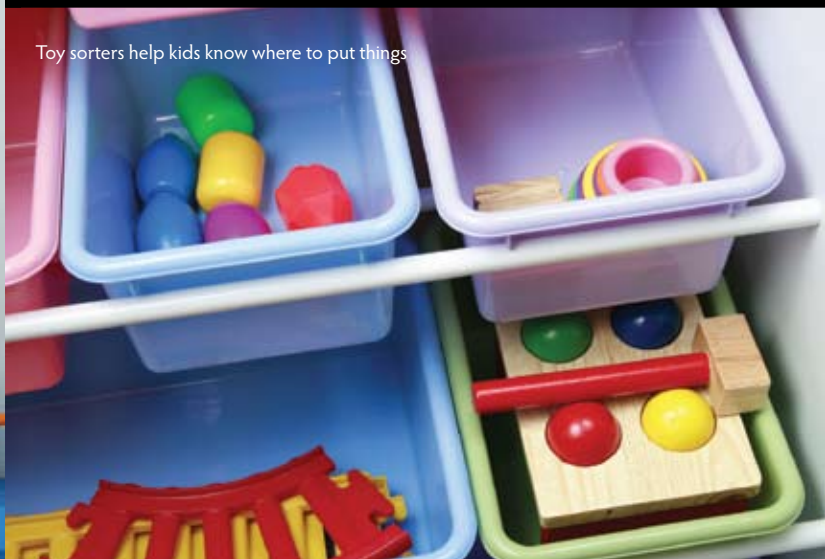
Five Great Ways To **Organize Like a Pro**



by Megan Hodges

It's that time of year when people get tired of seeing the 'summer clutter' that has accrued from months of vacations, visitors, and just a plum relaxation state of mind. But, now that summer is over, and the kids are heading off to school again, it's time to re-think the clutter. But, for a lot of us, we can't even get through the cleaning of our garages, files, and pantries, because our houses are not only in need of cleaning, but also of organization.

Now that fall is here, have a new goal: let's try to get our homes functional again. Wouldn't you like to be able to find an important piece of paper when you need it? Or have a place to call home for your mail and bills? How about a spot where the kids knew to put their school work?



Toy sorters help kids know where to put things

### A REAL MESS

When Cypress residents Mike and Tara Kosh were asked about how much time they felt they looked for missing items, their response was typical. "Can we quantify that? Easily twenty minutes a day looking for shoes, matching socks, permission slips, that pesky preschool tuition envelope, things lost in my car, and then there is that pit the garage."

*Life's fluctuations keep you in a continual state of re-organizing*

- Megan Hodges



Get dressed quickly by sorting clothing by color and type



Dividers in dresser drawers help sort smaller items



Desk drawer sorters keep school supplies tidy

## Steps for Organizing Like the Pros

It doesn't take someone else to get your household running in an orderly fashion. Here are small steps and great tips to get the craziest households headed in an organized direction.

### 1 Have the Right Frame of Mind

Finished and completed organization is a state that cannot be obtained, because life is ever changing. Living an organized life, however, is something that everyone can have. You will always be entering/exiting different seasons of life: new homes, changing jobs, getting married/ divorced, kids, relocation, retirement, etc. These changes demand that your perspectives and material possessions change with you, and each one affects what, why, and how you organize. Life's fluctuations keep you in a continual state of RE-organizing.

### 2 Make a List

List on a piece of paper your projects of disorganization. Seeing what needs to be done helps to make organizing manageable. You can group these projects in many different ways; by room, subject/ family matter, or time constraint. Once you have a list, it's easier to tackle one project at a time and cross it off the list. Remember people lose motivation when they see how big the mess is, but if you group them into smaller projects, they become more manageable. Set weekly goals, and feel good crossing it off when it is completed.

### 3 Group "Like Things" Together

Start broad and work through the details. When you start on home files, for example, move all stacks of paper from around the house into one room. Then sort them into three stacks; keep, throw away, or shred.

### 4 Find a Home for Everything

Every item in your house needs to have a designated spot to call home, and everyone who uses that item needs to know where that home is. Label bins, cabinets, and drawers so that everyone remembers what goes where.

### 5 Get the Family Involved

Getting organized is a family project. It is great for kids to help and instills in them a sense of organization for their life. Once the Kosh's got into the groove of purging, sorting, and categorizing, they were amazed at the momentum they had. "My husband even got in on the fun, and we started to see how many garbage cans we could fill." **CFM**

*MEGAN HODGES owns a professional organizing business in Houston, Houston Organized, and has been in the business of helping families create a space that is utilized to its full potential and is functional for their use. For more information go visit us at [houstonorganized.com](http://houstonorganized.com).*

# Fun Ways To Get Kids to Help

by Katrina Katsarelis



- Play their favorite CD so they can clean to the music.
- Instead of saying, "Clean all that stuff out from under your bed," give them one specific project at a time. "Put all your Barbies in this box and the Barbie clothes in this box."
- Make a game of it. "Simon says throw your clothes in the hamper. Simon says, put your books on the shelf."
- Set a timer and tell them to clean fast and furious until the bell goes off. Ready, set, go!
- Have kids help pick out bins and make labels for them by cutting photos of the items out of store ads, magazines, or photos on the web. This helps them remember exactly where to put things.
- Reward them with stickers or other motivating prizes after they're done.
- Keep a donation box in their room where they can put old toys or clothes they are ready to get rid of and no longer play with. This also teaches them to be charitable.
- Don't let it build. Encouraging them to clean up mini messes every day is easier than tackling a major mess every week.

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