

Your Guide to a Vibrant Lifestyle

Lakeside Edition

LivingTM

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***The staff at
Dr. Karen Cooper's
family dental
office in Rowlett is
celebrating their
10th anniversary
this year!***



**DR. KAREN COOPER,
FAMILY DENTAL**

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SIMPLE SOLUTIONS TO ORGANIZE YOUR CHILD'S ROOM

By Jennifer Humes

Do your attempts to organize your children's rooms seem futile after one play session? Do you spend countless hours cleaning, picking up, and putting away? What does it take to get children to organize their rooms?

It may seem logical to organize when the child is absent. No, "I want that!" or, "That's mine!" Parents often organize according to their own needs or wants, and not those of the children. When children are part of the organizing process, they better understand how to maintain the system. They may even put things away without you asking. Getting your children involved also encourages responsibility. Ultimately children have to like their rooms; otherwise, the order will not be maintained. Here are a few tips to help guide you through the process. Remember to keep it simple and fun.

- Plan and attack.
- Schedule a date and time to organize. Get the whole family involved if possible.
- Start on one side of the room and work around.
- Use a timer to stay on track.
- Take occasional breaks.
- Have ready-made snacks and drinks handy for the inevitable "hungeries."

Sort, donate, recycle or trash.

Place everything into boxes labeled sort, donate, recycle or

trash. Sort like items together. Donate items to local charities. Check with your sanitation department to see if items can be recycled. If the item is broken and not easily repairable, throw it away.

Containerize and rearrange.

Utilize containers that complement the room and create a home for each item. Make it easy for kids to return things.

Rearrange furniture to create zones for each primary activity: sleeping, studying, reading, playing, crafting and dressing.

Simple Solutions

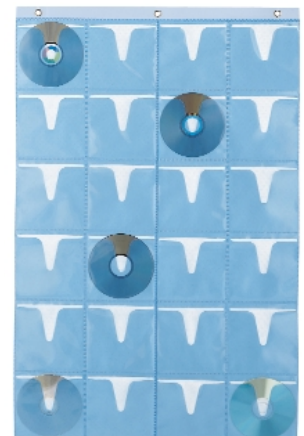
- Use stackable bins or boxes for easy access.
- Sort games and puzzles by type: family oriented, large, small, etc. Store on bookshelves. Use a tool box with multiple compartments to sort all those hard to find Lego pieces.

- Create a quiet space for reading and studying. Use bookshelves or stackable crates with solid surfaces to support the weight of books. Arrange books so children can find their favorite books quickly.

- Create seating areas for reading, crafting, or playing by using beanbag chairs, large oversized pillows, or miniature chairs. Make it comfortable.

- Use a multi-level shelving unit or cabinet designed for all electronic essentials: TV, VCR, CDs, DVDs, videos and games.

- Designate an inbox and outbox for school assignments





and school paperwork needing to be signed and returned.

- Arts and crafts stored in storage units with drawers and on wheels makes it easy to

transport crayons, markers, pens, pencils, scissors, and glues. A second unit can provide easy access to all the different types and sizes of paper, stickers and stencils.

- Contain sports gear in larger containers, such as trunks or oversized buckets.

- Choose lighting that is not only safe but fun to turn on and off.

- Place in-season clothing within reach, and store out-of-season clothing in containers on the top shelf. Arrange by clothing type on size-appropriate hangers or hanging shelf organizers. Have clothing rods at a child's level. Keep a stool or ladder handy for out-of-reach items. Create a versatile system that adapts as your children grow.

- Have a clothes hamper for dirty clothes in the room. Donate outgrown clothing.

Label, label, label!

Invest in a label maker and plenty of label tape in various sizes and colors. Clearly label bins, drawers, racks, shelves and storage containers with labels or photos of contents. This will help remind the children where items belong.

Don't waste valuable wall space.

- Unused or outgrown toys with sentimental value can become a special display.
- Hang artwork, plaques and

collections.

- Display awards, trophies, and stuffed animals on floating shelves.

- Use magnetic boards for art, schoolwork, activity calendars and miscellaneous notes and clippings. (This also eliminates the hazard of sharp push pins.)

- Dry erase or chalkboards can serve as a creative outlet for drawing or doodling.

The secret to staying organized is establishing routines.

Designate pickup times daily or weekly. Schedule major clean-and-organize days once a month. Teaching your children to pickup after themselves is key. As your children grow, so do their needs. Adjust rooms accordingly as needed.

Reward your children for keeping their rooms orderly.

Kids love to be recognized for their efforts and will take pride in a well-kept room.

Create a space that is functional and fun. You will wish you were a kid again, and your children's rooms will become the favorite rooms in the house.

Jennifer Humes, Clutter Queen®, a Professional Organizer in



Magnetic Wipe-Off Boards, \$19.99-\$29.99

Magnetic Wipe-Off Boards are just as fun as they are functional! The magnetic surface allows you to post messages, reminders, notes and photos with magnets. The board also features a wipe-off surface so you can jot down messages with a dry erase marker. The small board has an easel stand and the large board (shown) features a hanger on the back for mounting on a wall.

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Calypso Toy Trolley, \$19.99

Made from durable, recycled fiberboard and featuring convenient swivel casters, the Calypso Toy Trolley is a wonderful, space-efficient storage solution for just about anything. It's easily

wheeled or carried from room to room, making it a clever option for rounding up toys, magazines, laundry, craft projects and more.

Rubbermaid 16 gallon bucket is available at Lowe's. All other products pictured, are available at The Container Store.