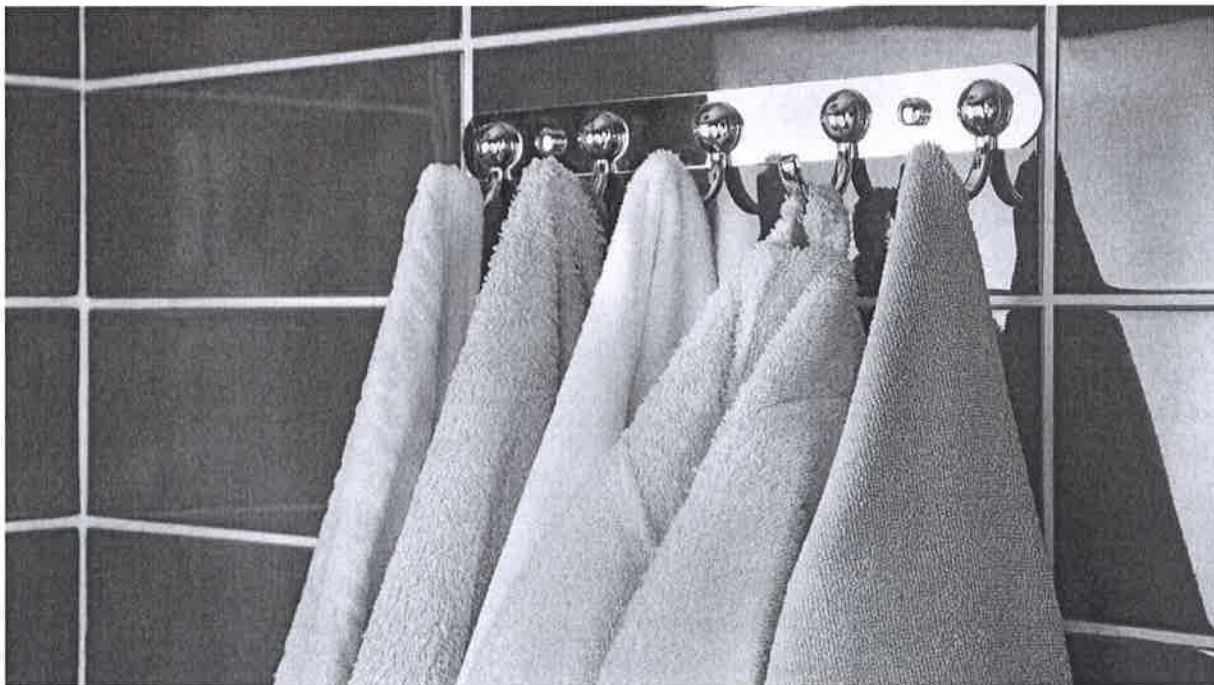


Understood

8 Ways to Use Color-Coding to Help Kids With Executive Functioning Issues

By Lexi Walters Wright

Does your child have trouble keeping track of things—from class assignments to sports gear? Organization can be a problem for kids with executive functioning issues. Try these ideas to make it easier for your child to keep tabs on her stuff at home and school.



1 of 8

Assign a color to each child.

If you have more than one child, let each of them choose a color. Then stick to their colors when you buy everyday items like towels, toothbrushes, water bottles, laundry bags and even electronics chargers. That way each sibling knows right away which thermos or blanket is theirs. This can help them understand which items they're responsible for—which could help minimize bickering.



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Use different-colored bags for different kinds of gear.

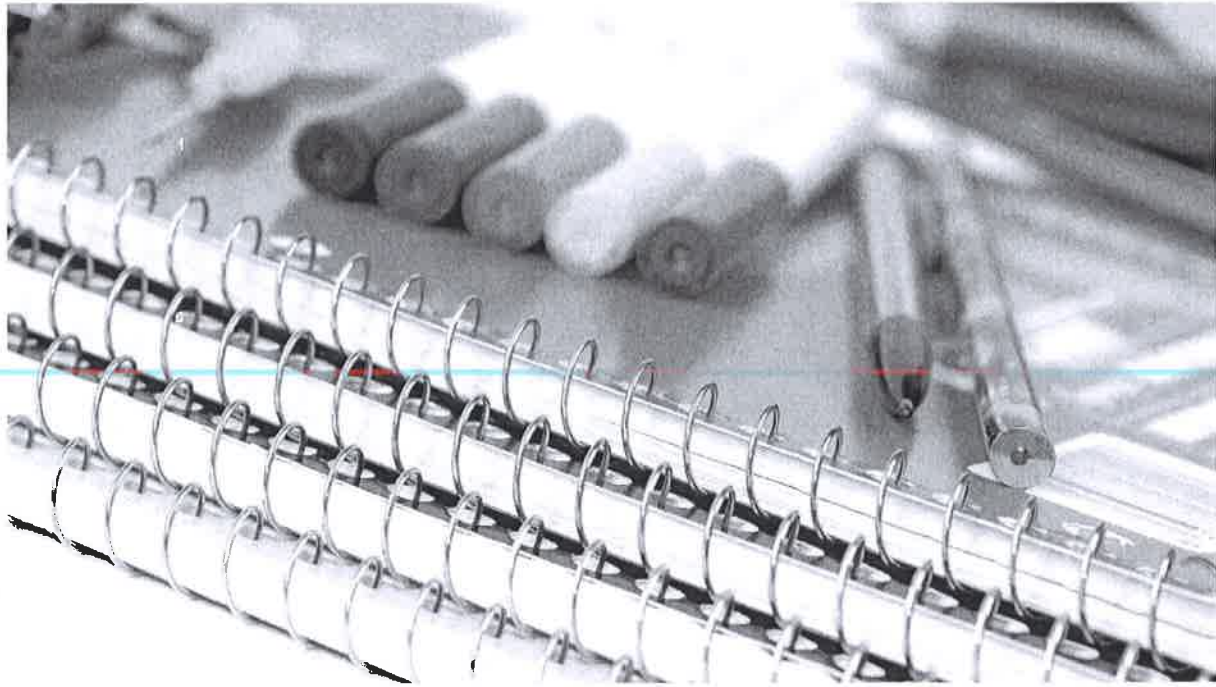
Try organizing your child's activities by color. Use large washable sacks in different colors. For example, you can keep all her soccer supplies in a yellow bag, her ballet gear in a red one, and so on. To make the contents even more recognizable, you can customize each bag with the name of its sport or activity. This makes it even easier for your child to know she's grabbing the right one on her way to practice.



3 of 8

Color-code the family calendar.

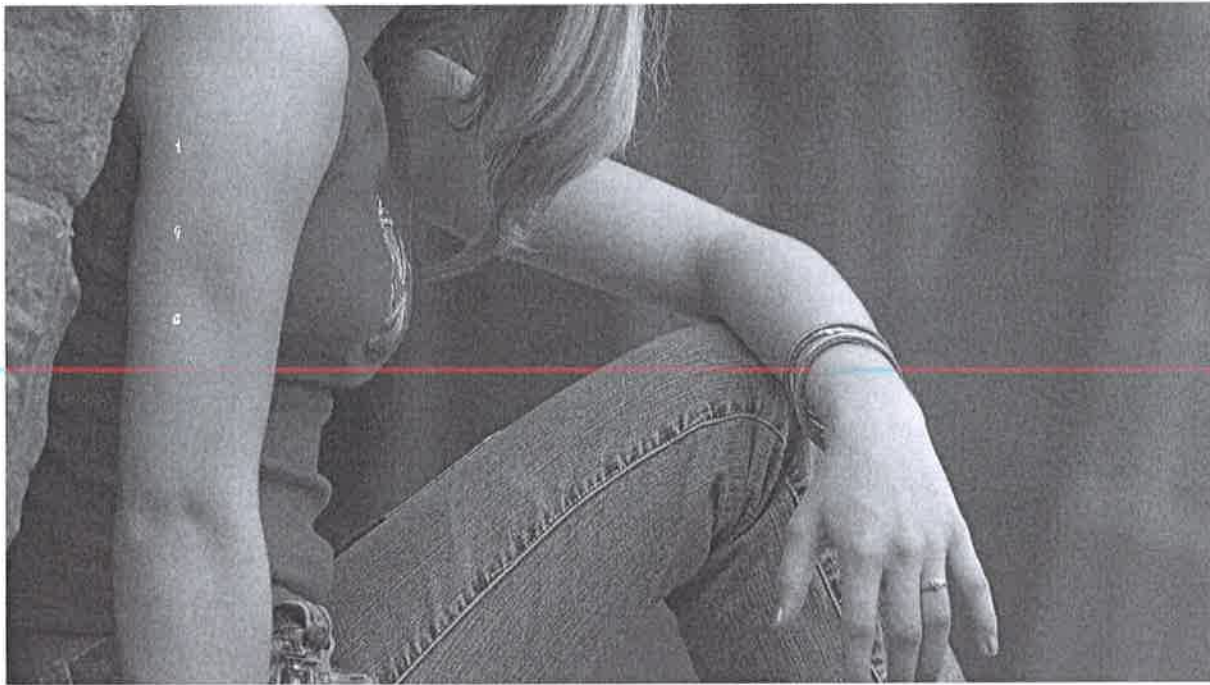
Consider investing in a giant wall calendar. You can use a different color for each family member as you write in events. For example, your child's violin lessons and doctor's appointments could be marked in green. Your board meetings and exercise classes might be red, and so forth. This can make it easier for your child to focus on what she needs to know to keep her schedule straight. If your family uses a joint digital calendar (like Cozi or Google Calendar), you can also assign colors to events. Check under "settings."



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Use different-colored supplies for each school subject.

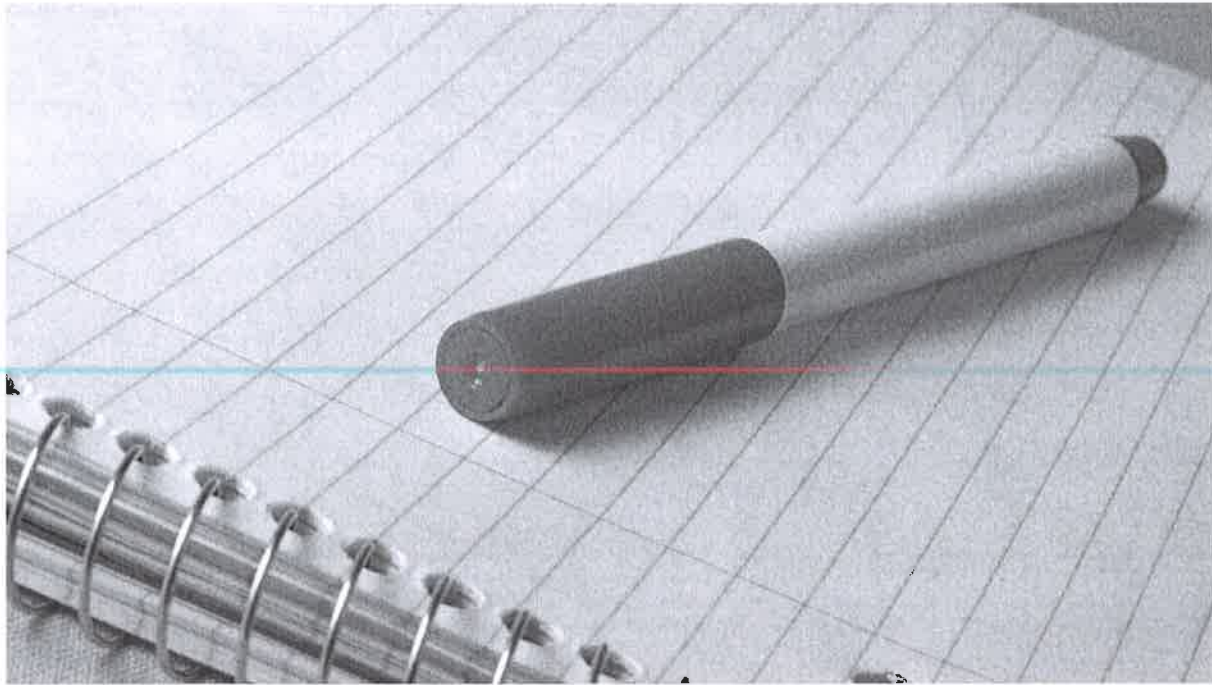
When each class has its own color, it can make it easier for your child to see if she has everything she needs in her book bag. Use red, say, for her reading folder, textbook cover and notebook. Blue could be for math, and so on. If your child has a homework station, follow this color scheme when using storage bins for class-specific supplies. For example, calculators and rulers for math class go in the blue bin. Older kids can also use color-coding on digital folders on their computers.



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Use different-colored bracelets as homework reminders.

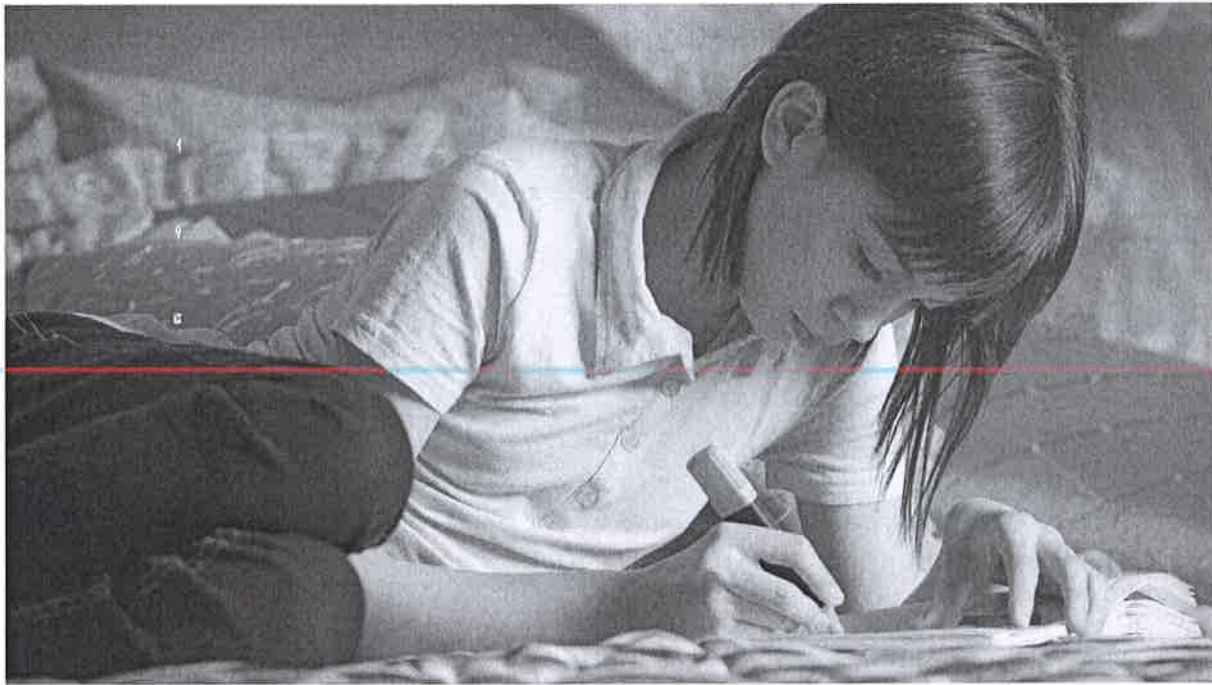
Once your child knows what color goes with each subject, buy her a set of corresponding rubber bracelets to take to school. Encourage her to slip a red bracelet on her wrist, for example, when she's assigned reading homework. Then remind her to check her wrist when she gets home. She can look at her bracelets to remember which assignments she needs to work on.



6 of 8

Encourage her to take notes in “home” and “school” colors.

Some kids find it helpful to distinguish what they learned in class from the teacher from what they learned studying at home. Whether your child takes notes by hand or on the computer, suggest that she use different colors. For example, she could use a black pen or font for class notes and blue for notes she takes at home. That way if she has a question about something in her notes, she knows where she learned it: “Last week, I wrote that an obtuse angle is 90 degrees. Is that really what the teacher said?”



7 of 8

Create a highlighter or color-coded underlining system for note-taking.

When each color has a specific purpose, your child can scan a page and know where to look for what she needs. For example, she can mark all new terms or vocabulary words in yellow, the main topic in green and each subtopic in pink. This works whether she's studying textbooks, handwritten notes or printed-out notes. (This approach tends to work best for shorter assignments. It could be visually overwhelming to do this throughout big chunks of text.) Most word-processing software has highlighter functions, so she can use this technique on the computer, too.



8 of 8

Color-code to-dos.

Use different-colored sticky notes to help your child keep track of when to do tasks like schoolwork or chores. The color of the sticky note on an assignment or chore could indicate how urgent it is. For example, tasks that need to be done first can be flagged with red stickies, those due by the end of the week could be orange, and so on.

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Kids with weak executive functioning skills have trouble with things like planning, organizing and managing time. Experts don't know exactly what causes this. But there are some likely causes and contributing factors.

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5 Common Myths About Executive Functioning Issues

If your child has executive functioning issues, you know how real these issues are—and how big an impact they can have. Whether you're new to the topic or not, you might have trouble separating fact from fiction. Here are five common myths about executive function, put to rest.



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