Organizational Assistance for Older Students

As students get older, more organizational skills are expected of them from daily paper and assignment coordination to organization and presentation of written reports. Due to brain organization, these are almost impossible tasks for many students who have non-verbal learning problems. The underlying difficulties are due to a combination of weakness in the following skills:

- Attention – elements of assignments and//or explanations "leak out"
- Memory – what is the assignment, how do I do it?
- Sequencing problems – what comes first, second, etc.?
- Part to whole processing – ideas are difficult to gather into a "whole"
- Executive planning is not functioning as expected
- Lack of appropriate awareness of the passage of time

Missing or late assignments ARE NOT A RESPONSIBILTY problem. They are brain formation difficulties. These students need to be given clear, structured support until they have been TAUGHT how to organize and plan.

DAILY ORGANIZATION ASSISTANCE – adult weekly follow-up may be necessary to PREVENT the downslide which occurs when assignments are missing

Supplies:
A plastic accordion folder with 6 dividers, copy machine to create assignment sheets, blank calendars, a few manila folders (as necessary), paper, tape, scissors

Initial Procedure:
- Create assignment sheets with classes listed in the order of attendance (Sample attached)
- Make numerous copies (Can put 2 forms on a sheet of paper and cut in half)
- Affix 5 forms to the front of the accordion folder (under the flap) each Sunday night so there is a blank one available each day of the week
- Label the section tabs in the order of attendance
- Make a "HAND IN" tape and tape inside the front pocket
- Make a "THINGS TO DO" tag and tape inside the last pocket

How to Use Accordion Folder:
- Carry folder to all classes and always bring it home

- Record date for each subject – including book, assignment, due date, test dates, etc.
- If no homework, write "None" or "0"
- Place all incomplete work or items that need to go home into the last "THINGS TO DO" pocket
- Place all complete work into the "HAND IN" pocket
- <u>No</u> papers are placed in books, book bag or locker
- Place graded papers <u>behind</u> the appropriate subject tab
- An additional folder may be added in the back to hold clean paper or expand for another subject
- Double check all materials and books necessary to be brought home or back to school

Work Completion:
- Choose a routine, clear, non-distracting space to complete your work
- Place books on floor to your left
- Place assignment sheet and work papers on the desk or table top
- Place accordion folder on the floor to your right
- Have one subject at a time on top of desk
- Place book on floor to right and papers in "HAND IN" pocket as completed
- Place books and folder into book bag when work is complete
- Cross off each assignment from sheet as completed

Calendar upkeep:
- Transfer test and future due dates onto monthly calendar
- Count the number of working days between assignment and due date
- Calculate days or pages necessary for study prior to test
- Break long-term assignments into parts and assign dates for completion of each part
  - It may be necessary for the teacher to assist student in the process of creating due dates for each section of work

<u>WRITTEN WORK ASSISTANCE</u> – adult assistance may be necessary until well-learned
- Brain storm: INSPIRATION software can be downloaded for a 30-day free trial through <u>Inspiration.com</u>. It is very helpful for brain storming and creates an automatic outline. A spell checker is included. Purchase price is around $65.00.
- Outline – may use INSPIRATION
- Gather data
- Copy machine can assist note card making
- Colored folders, markers and colored cards can help

- Essay tests can be assisted through creation of a Mind Map (as in INSPIRATION) during test

DATE_____

BK	SUBJECT	ASSIGNMENT	DUE	TEST	

DATE_____

BK	SUBJECT	ASSIGNMENT	DUE	TEST	

DATE_____

BK	SUBJECT	ASSIGNMENT	DUE	TEST	

DATE_____

BK	SUBJECT	ASSIGNMENT	DUE	TEST	

Dr. Val Scaramella-Nowinski
Pediatric Neuropsychology
Pediatric Neuropsychology Diagnostic and Treatment Center
(708) 403-9000   www.ndcbrain.com