

The Power of Getting Organized!

By: Shanida Mathieu

As a parent of a special-needs child, it's often the small things—getting him dressed, out the door, starting homework—that feel like monumental obstacles. Having a child with health issues or developmental challenges also means having a ton of paperwork, pharmacy instructions, assessments, and equipment directions etc. and before you know it, you are buried!



Over the years, I have felt overwhelmed by the massive amounts of paperwork and documentation. From the beginning of school to the time my child either graduates or "ages out" of his entitlement to special education services, the accumulation of IEPs, evaluations, progress reports, correspondence (including emails), notes, journals, samples of his work and medical records can fill an entire file cabinet. While I have been tempted to throw out those papers, which would be a mistake. Because I've learned the importance of the different documents and how to organize them sensibly, I no longer have mountains of paperwork everywhere. I've learned to get ahead of the game by developing this habit.

It is strongly recommended that parents organize their child's school records in a binder or by use of a flash drive to ensure the records are in one central location.



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I've learned to get ahead of the game by developing this habit now. I've found keeping both medical and educational records combined to be beneficial.

However, whatever system you choose, think about maintaining notes for any of the following just to name a few:

- Educational plans (Individual Education Program [IEP] or 504 accommodation plan)
- Report cards
- Educational assessments and state testing results
- Communication log and copies of all emails
- Requests for services
- Assessments

Always remember:

When in doubt, don't throw it out!



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