News Release

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Too much clutter? Now is the time to tackle it!

For many people, clutter is a fact of life. But if you find yourself spending a lot of time looking for things you need but can’t put your hands on, you know it’s a problem that needs some attention. Another clue is the feeling that a lack of organization is causing you stress. If this sounds familiar, it’s time to tackle the problem.

Start small. Many experts suggest starting with one room, one location (the dining room table) or even one continually occurring item (piled-up mail). Usually, items get piled up on any available surface because there is either no better place for them, or the place designated for them is inconveniently located or stuffed full. Using a critical eye, you need to determine the problem and design a solution that works for you.

A good starting place could be your bedrooms. Take everything out of the closet, dressers, shelves, under the bed. Put stuff in separate piles: clothes, shoes, toys, books, school supplies, sports equipment, etc. Work with your children to pick the toys and belongings that are most important, and separate those they don’t use any more. You can give old toys, books and clothes to a friend, community center or Head Start classroom. You can also sell them.

Make decisions. Almost always, clutter piles up because you (or someone else in your household) haven’t yet made a decision on what to do with it. Nearly every family goes through this on a daily basis: Should we keep this catalog? Has everyone read today’s (or yesterday’s or last Sunday’s) newspaper? Will I wear this sweater next winter? Will we ever use mom’s old fondue set? Sometimes, it’s only when the unexpected guest drops in, or the available space becomes filled to the brim, do we look around and realize that our “stuff” has become clutter. The secret is to continually make decisions on what to do with items.

Design organizing systems to work for you. Make sure you have workable storage spaces and a system that’s easy for you and your family to adopt.

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Give things a home. Keep similar items together so that family members know where to find things. For example, keep school supplies near the desk or table where your children do homework. Be sure to put children’s things in a place that’s easy for them to reach.

Put items inside drawers, closets, covered boxes or plastic containers so dust can’t collect on them. Put labels on containers to show where things belong. Have your children write or draw labels.

Review the “clutter plan” with your children. Have them try to put one thing back before getting out something else. Or, schedule 5 minutes of clean-up time every night.

Conquering clutter helps you find things more quickly, clean surfaces more easily, and you may even save money by not buying stuff today that can easily become clutter tomorrow.

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