

Teach your children organization skills

Q: Before I had children my house was organized. Now it looks like a shipwreck. My home is decorated with toys, dirty dishes, shoes and kids' clothes. How do I regain order?

A: You can still regain the order you once had. However, you will need to change your system.

Develop a new plan by teaching your children organization skills. Implement the 10 Ls of organization.

1. Live by example. You cannot expect your children to keep their room organized when you have clutter piles around the house. The best tool for teaching is showing someone how to do something, not just communicating verbally.

2. Lay out a workable organization schedule. Chores or tasks should be age appropriate. You cannot expect your 3-year-old to make his bed, but you can show him how to pick up toys and put them in a basket.

3. List the things that need to be done on a daily or weekly basis. This should be a written plan that everyone understands. Don't make assumptions. If you expect your teenager's room to be picked up, make a list of what needs to be done. The list may look like this:

— Pick up clothing off the floor and take the items to the laundry room
— Put books on the bookshelf
— Organize your school papers in a binder or a file system

— Throw away all trash
— Make your bed
— Close the closet door and shut the dresser drawers
— Find a home for every item in your room

4. Launch a workable system for them. A plan will fail if discipline isn't used. You will need to make sure your children are following the plan. They may need daily reminders to pick up toys, shoes, coats, backpacks, etc.

5. Label their things. When



Domestic planner
Diane Koehn

you organize toys, put a label on the container. Use a picture if your child is too young to read.

6. Lend a helping hand. Sometimes your child may feel overwhelmed and may need your help. Take, for instance, your 13-year-old daughter's closet that is crammed with clothes. She may need you to help her make decisions as she sorts through the clothes.

7. Lead your children down the organization road. Organization is a difficult skill to learn. Begin teaching this skill before your children learn to walk. Create a sense of order in their life. Help your children pick up their things and put them in their home.

8. Listen to what they say and ask questions. The best way to get cooperation is to listen. Ask your child to give you a good reason why his socks are in the middle of the family room floor.

Ask him if it is fair for you to pick up his things. After all, you aren't asking him to pick up your things.

9. Love them each step of the way. Your love is a necessary ingredient if you expect your child to listen to your instruction.

10. Lecture as a last resort. You could lecture your child about his messy room or offer to help him get it organized. The latter is more effective.

Today's refrigerator bulletin: "Time invested in training now will reap results in later years!"

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PHOTOS BY MARTY ECKLY
Linda Peters was wearing a sunflower T-shirt when this photo was taken in the evening.

SUNFLOWER

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compost from Tuthill Farms and Composting Inc. of South Lyon.

"I believe in a lot of compost," he said.

To hold a row of sunflowers upright along a fence, Chuck used wide rubber bands around the tall stems (sometimes putting several rubber bands together) and then attached them to the fence.

Second place, 15 inches — 11-month-old Elliott Grunnell of Royal Oak. His dad, Freeman, submitted the entry.

Megan, his mom, planted Martha Stewart seeds along a tall white fence and believes the heat and sun were very good for them.

They worked their yard compost and humus from English Gardens into the soil before planting.

Megan also planted small, deep red sunflowers among the row of plants, which she used as cut flowers.

Although the weather has been beastly, the sunflowers grew well, with Miracle-Gro being the preferred fertilizer. Much sun and water seemed to do the trick.

www.observerandcentric.com



Elliott Grunnell, age 11 months, is shown here with his mommy, Megan, and his daddy, Freeman.

Space limitations don't allow me to share stories about some of the other people who joined in this contest, but we want to thank you all and wish you well when you participate next year — and we hope you do!

And much appreciation to English Gardens for sponsoring this event.

Prizes will be awarded 1 p.m.

Saturday, Sept. 21, at the English Gardens store at 6370 Orchard Lake Road in West Bloomfield.

You're welcome to attend and talk to the winners to find their secrets of growing large sunflowers.

VANES

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bears a grid pattern. The sun, covered with gold leaf, is placed higher than the other forms, and has wavy "rays" emanating from it.

A star and triangular flag that seems to be waving in a breeze are featured on the other vane.

"The attention to detail is always something I kind of tout as our strong point," said Forbe, who is originally from Grosse Pointe. "I like to create work that has a high attention to detail ... look at it as a piece of jewelry."

The clock will have a toptail, planter and bench. It could become a meeting place for shoppers.

Other artists whose works are involved with The Village of Rochester Hills are artist and landscape designer Deborah Silver; Jackie DeCosmo, whose watercolor of the mall will be on billboards, on movie screens and in newspapers; and Don Brown, whose carvings of peaches, plums, cherries and ivy will adorn shops.

Forbe started his business a few months after he graduated from CCS, making his own furniture and fixtures in wood and steel.

Sometimes the young artist used materials from scrap yards.

Soon Forbe was marketing his pieces. Local architect Ron Rea noticed Forbe's work and hired him for projects.

Forbe's artistry can be found in Birmingham (at a new store, Graziella Ltd.), Detroit (at CPOP Gallery and the Duet restaurant), Bay Harbor and Petoskey, among other locations.

He builds designs by clients as well as creates his own, for homes and businesses, including desks, railings and entertainment centers.

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