

## **ORGANIZING YOUR TOY CLUTTER**

By aidenofthetower [Infobarrel, August 6, 2009]

Clutter can easily become overwhelming. Having kids only adds to this problem. It is easy to become overwhelmed by your stuff and their stuff. One good way to help out with the clutter problems is by organizing all of the toys that your kids have accumulated over the years. This can be done without a huge expense and can make a huge difference in how you feel about the things that you have and about your living space in general.

### **Go Through The Toys.**

Most kids have a collection of toys that includes toys that still work, toys that are broken or have missing pieces, and toys that they no longer play with. When you decide to get organized and fix the problem of your toy clutter, the first step is to go through them and get rid of everything that they don't play with and that doesn't work any more. To do this set out three boxes. Have the first one be the toys that they are going to keep, the second those that they are going to throw away, and those that are still good to donate to charity. Then have the kids separate them all out. After that take the box of "keepers" and go through it one more time to make sure that they are really toys your kids play with and not just toys they don't want to give up. Also make sure they don't keep things that don't work or are missing pieces.

### **Bookshelves.**

Not only are bookshelves great places to put books, they can also make great places to put toys. You can get baskets and put like items in the baskets. Small totes and shoe boxes also work well. Save a shelf or two for books and use the taller shelves for decorations and collectibles that shouldn't be played with. You can even set some toys up on the shelf (stuffed animals, dinosaurs, dolls, doll houses, ect). If you want to you can label the front of the shelf with what is supposed to go there. Have your kids make paper signs with pictures on them to help them know what goes in each basket, tote, or box. This will help them to put things back where they go.

### **Totes, Boxes, or Baskets.**

These things can make great places to store all sorts of toys. You can buy totes at Walmart and inexpensive stores such as the Dollar General and Family Dollar. Plastic and wicker baskets can be purchased at the dollar store for \$1. Shoe boxes are free and should always be kept when you buy a new pair of shoes. Diaper boxes can also make great boxes for your kids toys. If you are one who buys wipes in wipe boxes and don't get refills these also make great boxes for small items. Keep everything labeled and put like items into the same box. Also make sure you keep all accessories together (Mr. Potato Head parts with Mr. Potato Head,

Barbie clothes with Barbie, ect). Let your kids have a lot of fun decorating all the boxes. Cover them in paper and have them draw pictures of the items on there (cars, dolls, blocks, ect).

### **Stuffed Animal Rack.**

Most kids have stuffed animals that they can't bear (no pun intended) to get rid of. Some kids play with these a lot and others don't touch them much. Either way, buy a stuffed animal rack or make one from a large triangle of material. Tack it up in the corner of the room. Use a high one for stuffed animals that aren't played with often and a lower one for stuffed animals that are also play toys. This will let your kids have fun with them while giving them a great "home" to live in.

### **Live By Rules.**

It is often easy to let your kids play with every thing in sight. They have fun, they stay out of your hair, and they make a huge mess. This is less likely to get cleaned up, especially cleaned up with organization in mind. Because of that it is a good idea to make rules that only one or two types of toys can be played with at a time. Then make a rule that the items must be cleaned up before additional items can be taken out. Then enforce this rule. While it will be hard to enforce at the start, it will get easier and will make it less likely for your kids to make huge messes. Their toys and other belongings will stay more organized and you will stay saner.

### **Clean As You Go.**

Always make sure that things are cleaned up before you move onto other activities. Before the kids can go outside, go to the pool, leave for their soccer game, or play at the neighbor's house make sure that everything is picked up and in its place. This doesn't mean you should be doing it, but rather that your kids should learn to pick everything up before moving on to other things. This includes before going to bed! Have a clean start for next time will make it more likely that it will be kept clean. Getting in the habit of picking up now will make a huge difference for the future as well. They will be more likely to keep their space clean for the rest of their lives!

### **Go Through It Again.**

Every few months you should help your kids go through their items again. Often times you will find a lot of broken or missing toys in this time. You may also find items they have stopped playing with. You can use this time to make adjustments to your organization as well as finding new places for new toys. It is often a good idea to do this right after Christmas and maybe after each of your kids birthdays. Make sure you throw out everything that isn't working properly and get rid of the things they aren't playing with!

Keeping your kids toys organized will eliminate clutter, make things cleaner, and even make it easier to keep things clean and looking nice. It will also make it so that you only keep the things that you need and get rid of everything else. Plus you don't have to spend a fortune to get it done! In addition to the benefits you will get today, you will help teach your kids skills and habits that will last long into the future and make them cleaner and more organized teens (and then adults)!