

order. balance. beauty.

Your Kids Are Amazing*

Let them show you they're capable of improving organizing habits Marin Rose

My experience working with children of all ages has shown me that kids are tremendously adaptable, capable of change and willing to introduce order into their lives. Much, much more so than adults.

I've yet to encounter a young client who is more reluctant than his/her parents to let go of clutter, despite Mom and Dad's warnings. Usually it's parents' unconscious influence causing excessive object desire and attachment in kids. Sometimes it's overindulgence — allowing too much stuff into kids' lives. Often it's leading by poor example, regularly making unnecessary purchases for oneself and holding on to one's own clutter. Either way, kids internalize the message that objects are inherently valuable.

The result is more detrimental than a messy house. It's more stress for parents and kids, and conflict between the two. It's less time for play and diminished enjoyment of play. Long-term, it's the problems of the parents perpetuated in the lives of the children, from disorganization and debt to the reduced quality of life that comes from overvaluing "things."

Often it's impossible for parents to incite improved organizational behavior in their own kids. Like adults, kids encounter all kinds of conflicts and resentments if they sense they're being dictated to. As an objective outsider, I'm in a better position than parents to solicit kids' cooperation. I treat children with the same respect with which I treat their parents, serving as their partner in pursuit of customized solutions to increase their peace and productivity.

As with my adult clients, my kids lead the decision-making process, with my guiding support. As always, I focus on what's to be gained from organized living. Most kids are more than happy to sacrifice some old toys for more free time, less nagging from Mom and Dad and some quality family time.

The most effective way for parents to encourage improved organizing behavior in their kids is to lead by example. Allow your kids to observe you cooperating with your professional organizer, making the tough decisions. When it's their turn to purge, they'll be a lot more likely to buy in to the plan.

And step aside when it's their turn. Kids can sense when their parents have an opinion about what to keep and let go. Respect their choices and they'll be more motivated to take responsibility for their space and the belongings within it. Believe me, they want to.

Often it's parents' desire to "treat" their kids that lands another toy in the shopping cart. Kids won't argue with any suggestion to buy something. Don't tempt them! It's their job to push you toward indulging them. Push back. Believe me, they want you to.

Mark your calendar! Take advantage of free, unlimited, on-site shredding courtesy of Libra Organizing. Saturday, May 2, from 8-11 a.m. at The Cleveland Group, CPAs, parking lot on Davis Road. Shredding and recycling provided by Augusta Data Storage, Inc. Stop by Marin's table for free refreshments and organizing tips.

*Originally published on the Libra Organizing blog.



Professional Organizing Coach Marin Rose of Libra Organizing is celebrating five years organizing people's spaces and lives to help them become happier and more productive — and less stressed. Contact Marin to schedule a free organizing assessment in your home or office, or to hire her as a speaker. Visit libraorganizing.com.